

October Harvest: Four weeks of Horror's leading men (and beasts).

BY MAX LANSING

IT'S THAT TIME AGAIN, when the whole sane world is dominated by the same ghosts and ghouls that rule sci-fi fans all year long. And nowhere is that more apparent than on the Sci-Fi Channel, where October isn't just the scariest month of the year; it's also a delightfully terrifying state of maniacal mind. Theme weeks, horrifying hosts, surprise guests, and more will make Halloween fun four weeks long!

For four fiendish weeks, Sci-Fi presents *Legends of Horror Month*, a 20-day salute to actors Lon Chaney, Jr., Peter Cushing, Boris Karloff and Bela Lugosi's massive contributions and indelible influences on classic science fiction cinema.



Bela Lugosi and Lon Chaney Jr. in Universal's classic *Frankenstein Meets the Wolf Man*, airing on the Sci-Fi Channel.

Legends of Horror Month begins with Lon Chaney Jr. Week, made up of five films starring the charismatic actor with the unmistakable voice, all airing from October 3 to October 7.

In *Son of Dracula*, the mysterious Count Alucard marries a pretty girl and transforms her into his vampire bride. It airs Monday, October 3 at 9 pm ET* and 1 am ET*. Then, in *The Alligator People*, a wounded man is given serum extracted from an alligator and begins to take on the peculiar characteristics of the creature. It airs Tuesday, October 4 at 9 pm ET* and 1 am ET*. In *Man-Made Monster*, two scientists experiment with tremendous electrical charges and turn an unsuspecting individual into a human dynamo. It airs Wednesday, October 5 at 9 pm ET* and 1 am ET*. In *The Wolf Man*, an innocent man is attacked by a wolf and learns to his surprise that he is becoming a werewolf! It airs Thursday, October 6 at 9 pm ET* and 1 am ET*. Finally, in *Frankenstein Meets the Wolf Man*, a man who transforms into a werewolf meets Frankenstein's monster. It airs Friday, October 7 at 9 pm ET* and 1 am ET*.

Peter Cushing Week will be presented from October 10 to 14. When Dracula seeks his prey in a girls' private school, he turns an innocent beauty into a thing of unspeakable horror in *The Brides of Dracula*, airing Monday, October 10 at 9 pm ET* and 1 am ET*. Frankenstein restores the life of a long-dead creature, who goes on a killing spree in *The Evil of Frankenstein*, airing Tuesday, October 11 at 9 pm ET* and 1 am ET*. Daring scientists try to kill turtle-like monstrosities who devour natives in *Island of Terror*, airing Wednesday, October 12 at 9 pm ET* and 1 am ET*. A shipwrecked Robinson Crusoe faces cannibals and monsters in *Mystery on Monster Island*, airing Thursday, October 13 at 9 pm ET* and 1 am ET*. A notorious French nobleman's skull wields a vicious influence on those who have it in their possession, including an author doing research on the occult, in *The Skull*, airing Friday, October 14 at 9 pm ET* and 1 am ET*.

Then the Sci-Fi Channel salutes a man whose name is synonymous with science fiction with Boris Karloff Week, airing October 17 through 21. In *The Mummy*, an archeological expedition discovers an Egyptian mummy, who later comes to life, seeking its ancient mate. It airs Monday, October 17 at 9 pm ET* and 1 am ET*. In *The Raven*, based on the Edgar Allan Poe story, when three magicians vie for power over each other, one is turned into a raven. It airs Tuesday, October 18 at 9 pm ET* and 1 am ET*. In *The Bride of Frankenstein*, notorious Dr. Pretorius forces Dr. Frankenstein to create a bride for the monster. It airs Wednesday, October 19 at 9 pm ET* and 1 am ET*. In *The Terror*, a lost French officer, rescued by a lovely girl who disappears mysteriously soon after, uncovers a diabolical plan of torture in his search for her. It airs Thursday, October 20 at 9 pm ET* and 1 am ET*. In *Black Friday*, a doctor transplants part of a gangster's brain to save his friend, and creates a dangerous killer in the process. It airs Friday, October 21 at 9 pm ET* and 1 am ET*.

Finally, the Sci-Fi Channel celebrates the most famous Dracula with Bela Lugosi Week from October 24 to October 28.

Innocent newlyweds find themselves caught in a horrible trap set by two lunatics in *The Black Cat*, airing Monday, October 24 at 9 pm ET* and 1 am ET*. Zombies rob graves and take bodies to a mill where

Continued on page 23



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Hollywood is coming soon to a computer screen near you.

BY JEFFREY FRENTZEN

WHEN I BOUGHT A COPY OF *It's a Wonderful Life* as a Christmas present last year, it wasn't a VHS videotape or laser disc. It was in a form that could only be shown on a computer screen. ■ Why watch movies on the computer? I'll try to answer that in the next 10 minutes. The recipient of the Christmas

present thought it was a cool novelty, a toy. There must be a demand for it, as you'll soon be able to select from a growing list of full-length feature films on CD-ROM (Compact Disc Read-Only Memory) and watch them on your computer. Kinesoft was the first company to pioneer this trend—their repackaging of *It's a Wonderful Life* comes in a two-disc CD-ROM set. Later

except it's filled with machine-readable data instead of tunes. A CD-ROM can hold more data than hundreds of floppy disks, and is an excellent medium for distributing very large computer programs, electronic books, and encyclopedias.

CD-ROMs appeared in the mid-1980s and were marketed to libraries—whole library indexes and book abstracts were placed on convenient 5-1/4-inch CDs, letting library users conduct quick searches of massive archives. Government agencies and universities purchased these paper- and space- saving discs from third parties, or transferred their own paperbound data to custom-made CDs.

Someone got the idea to put game software on CD, and the floodgates opened. The hardware needed to adequately run the software, including systems with very fast processors and a CD-ROM reader, became less expensive. CD-ROM readers (or drives) have been rightfully criticized for being very slow devices, but most current drives are double the speed of the first-generation devices, and some recent CD-ROM drives, such as those from NEC and Pioneer, offer triple and quadrupled speed. Most games, like *Willy Beamish* and *Dracula Unleashed*, increase their speed by installing huge program files into the computer's disk memory (hard disks are faster than the fastest CD drives); such games require megabytes of storage space to house extensive sound and graphics.

The same enormous digital storage space requirements hold true for putting a Hollywood movie on CD-ROM. Actually, one CD-ROM cannot hold a complete feature-length movie; it takes two. In addition, I watched *It's a Wonderful Life* on my friend's expensive computer, and though the sound was of good quality, the picture was occasionally jerky and looked like a second-generation dupe. I'm still wondering if CD-ROM technology is going to replace VCRs, or the laser disc.

Someone at GameTek must think so. The company is currently planning to ship six full-length animated children's features, including *Treasure Island* and *Wind In The Willows*. The first 12 GameTek movie titles will come out in September, with eight more planned for October, and six more in November.

The "value-add" in GameTek's offerings, which may lure viewers away from their 25-inch TV to the much smaller computer screen, is a software-based user inter-



this year, George Romero's horror classic, *Night of the Living Dead*, and Fritz Lang's silent epic, *Metropolis*, will be available as "full-motion CD-ROM products," according to a recent press release from Miami-based GameTek. Other scheduled titles include CD-ROM versions of TV shows.

Browse through a local book store, Computer City, or the electronics emporium of a large department store, and you're likely to find dozens—maybe hundreds—of CD-ROM titles. The latest Tiger Software mail-order catalog contains page after page of CD-ROM listings. Some of you may have already bought some PC- or Macintosh-based computer games on CD-ROM. The medium looks identical to a music CD,

The offbeat movie-related CD-ROM *Midnight Movie Madness* may not be a valuable research tool, but it has a high fun-factor, and includes clips from a variety of sci-fi, fantasy and horror films.

Let the Fantasy Begin

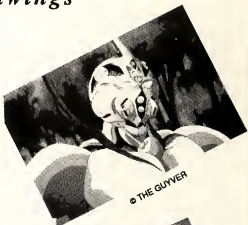
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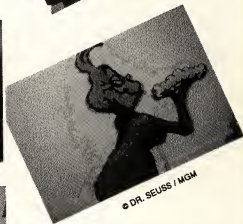
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face that leads them through a "virtual movie theater." The CD-ROM begins in an electronic theater lobby, which offers playable arcade games and an interactive refreshment counter. Using mouse-clickable on-screen controls, the viewer can play and pause the picture, as well as rewind and fast-forward at variable speeds. The frame-by-frame forward and frame-by-frame backward controls may or may not make the laser disc player obsolete.

The jury's still out regarding this use of CD-ROM. In the meantime, I use CD-ROM as a librarian would: to search electronic indexes and retrieve information for day-to-day use. My computer is primarily a word processor. If I need to find the titles of all computer games produced on CD-ROM over the past year, I use a CD-ROM product called Computer Select. It's easier and much faster to find those citations using the computer as opposed to looking them up in books. When I write movie reviews for *Funhouse*, the electronic magazine of cult and pop culture, I find film credits and other references using some of the movie-database CD-ROMs on the market.

Movie encyclopedias-on-disk can be a useful demonstration of all that's good (and bad) about CD-ROM. Microsoft's *Cinemania*, arguably the best of its type, attempts to live up to the marketing ploy of many recent CD-ROM titles—"interactive multimedia." You can look up movie reviews written by Roger

Ebert, Leonard Maltin, and Pauline Kael; play video and sound clips from *Star Wars*, *Citizen Kane*, *King Kong*, and other classics; and read filmographies of actors and directors and see what they look like. In other words, sound, video, and relevant information is presented on-screen simultaneously, with an easy-to-use interface.

Another marketing-scam word in the CD-ROM world, "hypermedia," is in full view on the sleeve that comes with *Video Movie Guide*, a CD-ROM version of the popular movie book by Mick Martin and Marsha Potter. "Hypermedia" and "interactive" conjure up images of being able to somehow "play" with the program on the screen, but the term is misleading. This CD-ROM is as interactive as any other computer program; it uses a very simple database searching program to help you identify movie titles and find information on personalities. As an aside, CD-ROM game promoters use the interactive term as a hot-button to distinguish their products from other games, but all games, even the ones we play with people, require interaction.

One of the more offbeat movie-related CD-ROMs is not valuable as a research tool but has a high fun-factor. *Midnight Movie Madness* collects trailers and pieces of trailers from a variety of sci-fi, fantasy, and horror movies on a CD-ROM. It includes clips from *Earth Vs. the Flying Saucers*, *Blood Feast*, *The Incredible Shrinking Man*, and other guilty

pleasures. It also purports to be a multimedia package, and the mixture of sound and graphics is entertaining...if your computer system is powerful enough to play smooth video.

Another offering, *Mega Movie Guide* from InfoBusiness, uses a fairly sophisticated database-search engine that lets users search by actor/actress, director, genre (e.g., Western, science fiction, comedy, or suspense), documentary films, made-for-TV films, length of film, black and white or color designation, Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) ratings, video rental availability, Academy Award winners, and multiple search topics, such as actor-director-award winner. It reminded me of *Cinemania*, which allows similar search capabilities. Like many CD-ROM titles, *Mega Movie Guide* lets users place bookmarks in favorite passages, as well as allow them to print a reference list which can be taken to the video store.

An upgraded version of the CD-ROM-based *Mega Movie Guide* will offer the expected database of movie titles, running times, and capsule reviews, but also includes more than two hours of live film footage in two- to four-minute clips. The company, which also produced Roger Ebert's *Deluxe Computerized Movie Home Companion*, will reportedly provide several thousand new and "in-depth" reviews. According to company officials, the video clips will be presented in 240-by-180 pixel resolution, which

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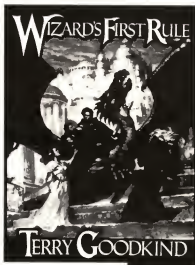
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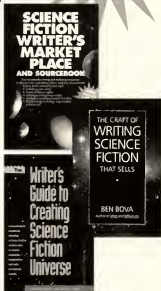
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is not a very high resolution.

After looking at a few movie guides on CD-ROM, it became clear that many home-computer users will probably have to upgrade their systems to play the video clips.

You can spend \$1,500 on a PC that will let you watch the video clips from any of these products; however, if you want to watch full-motion video at 24 frames-per-second in true color and without having to watch clips stop and start in mid-frame, you may have to spend a lot more. The often bogus advertising that accompanies CD-ROM software—"interactive multimedia in 3D," etc.—is applicable to the way "multimedia" hardware is sold. Many computers sold as multimedia PCs are barely up to the demands of full-motion video. The price for good-quality hardware components may be higher than you think, so approach the purchase of a so-called multimedia PC with skepticism.

The Macintosh is clearly superior in displaying full-motion video; PC compatibles are hamstrung in this area, as the video-playback software and operating systems aren't sophisticated enough to handle good video output. The reasons for watching movies on a computer versus a VCR are not yet compelling.

Besides electronic book publishing, CD-ROM's probable future lies in the blending of motion pictures and interactive games. Media Vision, a maker of sound and graphics hardware for computers, recently announced *The Daedalus Encounter*, a science-fiction game starring actress Tia Carrere. In this movie/interactive adventure, Carrere plays Ari, a futuristic heroine, and actor Christian Bocher co-stars as Zack. The object of the game is to save the heroes on an alien spaceship. Players commandeer an animated "probe" to help Ari and Zack explore the ship, encountering alien dangers along the way.

The game action has a variety of outcomes, depending on the player's individual moves. Filmed scenes of Carrere and Bocher were digitally edited with computer-generated backgrounds and animated characters. The game will be available this fall, in a two-disc CD-ROM set for PCs and Macintosh systems, for \$79.95. Origin Systems' third installment of its popular *Wing Commander* game series will also contain similar "movie"-like elements. *Wing Commander III: The Heart of the Tiger* is set in a Star Wars-type environment, and the player follows the adventures of Chris Blair, a starfighter aboard the *Tiger's Claw*, which is a spaceship caught in a violent war against aliens called the Kilrathi. Appropriately, Blair is portrayed by Mark Hamill. Other members of the star-spangled cast include Malcolm McDowell (in his first role since completing work on *Star Trek: Generations*) and Ginger Lynn Allan. □

Jeffrey Frentzen spent \$75 in 1976 for a manual typewriter; in 1994, he uses a fancy \$4,000 multimedia PC for typing chores and occasionally looks at CD-ROMs.

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Jeff Goldblum learns that there's more to fear than dinosaurs in Dean Koontz's *Hideaway*.

BY ROBERT MARTIN

HIDEAWAY, ONE IN THE LONG STRING of bestselling thrillers by Dean Koontz, is headed to the big screen. This alone would not be terrific news—Koontz's work has been adapted to the screen many times since 1977's *Demon Seed*, seldom with exemplary results. This time seems different; producers Cathleen Summers and

Dennis Quaid are giving this one "A" picture treatment, casting Jeff Goldblum, fresh from

Jurassic Park, as a man who, after a near-death experience, resumes his normal life—except that he is somehow linked to a serial killer who poses a threat to his family. Christine Lahti plays his wife, and Alicia Silverstone (from *The Crush*) is his teenage daughter. The screen



Jeff Goldblum stars in the latest Dean Koontz thriller to hit the screen, *Hideaway*.

adaptation is by Andrew Kevin Walker and Neal Jimenez, whose credits include *River's Edge*. Completing the package is director Brett Leonard, following up on the success of his previous thriller, *The Lawnmower Man*.

TriStar Pictures picked up the project as part of their "first look" development deal with Summers/Quaid Productions, and has tentatively scheduled a spring '95 release. Koontz was recently profiled and interviewed on the Sci Fi Channel, in the debut entry of a new series of specials entitled *Masters of Fantasy*; if you missed it, plans are afoot for a repeat in early '95. In November, a second installment of *Masters of Fantasy* will feature Anne Rice and Stephen King.

King, by the way, is reportedly thrilled with the results of his collaboration with director Mick Garris on the TV miniseries *The Stand*. No surprise, then, that Garris is attached to the next King project, an original screenplay soon to go before the cameras for Amblin' Entertainment. The title is *Rose Red*, and King is at this moment putting the last touch on the script's final revision. Other King product in the pipeline includes *The Shawshank Redemption*, directed by Frank Darabont (screenwriter of Kenneth Branagh's *Frankenstein*); an adaptation of *Thinner*, with Tom Holland directing, and *The Langoliers*, a TV miniseries in preparation by Laurel Entertainment. *Creepshow 3* may also see the light of day as a TV movie.

More TriStar news: William Gibson's *Johnny Mnemonic* has been moved up to a January, '95 release, to take advantage of the extra heat being generated by Keanu Reeves since his action-picture debut in *Speed*. The director of *Speed*, Jan de Bont, is giving off a lot of heat himself, and offered his pick of projects—he's going with *Godzilla*! Obviously, this is a man of refined sensibilities.

TriStar is hoping for the big Japanese lizard to spawn a series of big-budget, big-effects pictures, so expect all the stops to be pulled. The script concerns an "unstoppable alien threat" that threatens to ravage Earth and, incidentally, wakes the long-dormant Gamera. A battle royale will inevitably ensue, using the United States as a wrestling mat. More than one city will be laid waste in the globe-spanning action, which "will be highlighted by ground breaking visual effects and spectacular action sequences which play out against a compelling human drama," says TriStar.

Fortress 2, though scheduled for production this year, was orphaned when Stewart Gordon, slated to direct the sequel to his sci-fi prison epic, read the script and decided he'd rather make *Castle Freak*, a Charles Band production. If scheduling conflicts arise for *Fortress* star Christopher Lambert, Davis Productions may be forced to go with a different director on the second go-round. This time, the prison colony will be in an outer space setting. Meanwhile, *Castle Freak* has just finished principal shooting near Latvia, featuring critter design by the Emmy-nominated Optic Nerve Studios, a k a the *Baby*-lon 5 crew, headed by John Vulich and Everett Burrell.

Chatting with Sam Raimi for a future retrospective on his *Evil Dead* films, we got to chatting about *Evil Dead*'s Ash, actor Bruce Campbell. "I'm sad about his series,

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Brisco County, Jr., being cancelled," Sam lamented, "but it might mean that I get him for another picture." Raimi has a specific script in mind, casting Campbell as a jet-packing hero, out to foil a full-scale invasion of Earth. "But I understand he's getting a lot of offers now, so I don't even know if I could get him."

Since we thought Raimi might know, we asked about the rumor we'd heard that Campbell was up for the title role in *Spider-Man*, now in preparation by that other super-hot "action" director, James Cameron. He hadn't heard, but agrees that Campbell would be great in the part. "But I think Bruce'd be great in anything," Raimi, meanwhile, has gotten the go-ahead for his live-action *Frosty the Snowman*—a long way from *Evil Dead*, it seemed to me, until Bill Warren (who's working on what we expect to be a terrific book on Sam) pointed out that both stories end in meltdown sequences.

Talking to the *L.A. Times*, James Cameron shot down the brief-flying rumor that *Spider-Man* was to be back-burned because of the deluge of offers coming in to the writer-director of *True Lies*. Cameron confirmed the webslinger as his next project, and announced his intention to shoot his next action epic outside of the United States, in an effort to avoid the high labor costs that brought the budget of *True Lies* well over \$100 million. (We hear that Latvia is cheap.)

Battle of the Titans: Ted Bohus, of *Deadly*



Godzilla returns: TriStar Pictures is bringing back the big guy in hopes that state-of-the-art effects will spawn a franchise.

Spawn fame, is preparing *Vampire Vixens* from *Venus*, to shoot in suburban New Jersey. Sometimes good ideas just seem to travel through the ether; writer-director Brett Piper is mounting *Vampire Babes* from *Outer Space* in Orlando, Florida. Between these two, it looks like an all-out race to the video shelves!

EEK! Not another Freddie Krueger movie! (Somebody help me!) Ah, but this one looks different; *Wes Craven's New Nightmare*, expected to release around Halloween time, offers a few bizarre twists to the franchise. Wes Craven plays himself, as a filmmaker working on a film about a nightmare-haunting creature named Freddie Krueger. Robert Englund plays Robert Englund, the actor who plays Mr. Krueger. Heather Langenkamp, who starred in the original *Nightmare on Elm Street* as Nancy, plays Heather Langenkamp, who is starring in Mr. Craven's film, as Nancy. And Heather is getting bizarre phone calls from an apparent maniac claiming to be Freddie Krueger.

Frankly, I suspect that Englund guy.

Craven's next is *A Vampire in Brooklyn*, starring Eddie Murphy, from a script by Murphy and his brother Charlie, who also has a principal role. After wrapping this family affair, Murphy will go directly to another favorite genre director, John Landis, for the remake of Jerry Lewis's remake of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. The new version of *The Nutty Professor* will probably have Lewis, who owns the property, as executive producer, and possibly in a cameo role.

The direct-to-video *Aladdin* sequel *Return of Jafar* has done well for Disney, with 1.5 million units moved in two days, and projected total sales of 10 million copies. A second direct-to-video *Aladdin* is now being prepared, as well as a *Lion King* sequel, and a

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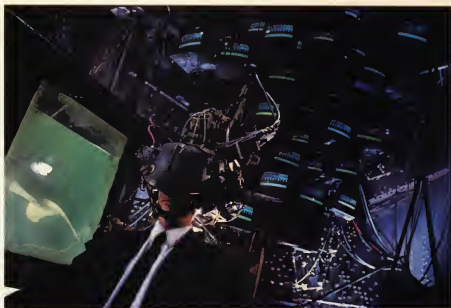
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Muppet Classic Theater feature, all to debut in the home market. For television, Disney is preparing 65 episodes of *Aladdin*, 13 of these scheduled for broadcast on CBS.

And Disney has the following theatrical features in the pipeline: *Pocahontas* is scheduled for a summer 1995 release; *Hunchback of Notre Dame* is scheduled for a Christmas '95 release and *Fa Mulan* is in development with animation to be done in Disney's Florida studios for a 1996 release. *Fantasia Continued* is in development for a Christmas, '96 or spring '97 release; and *Hercules* is in development for a 1997 release.

Amblimation, Spielberg's cartoon studio, is working on a feature version of the Broadway hit *Cats* for theatrical release, and an *Animaniacs* feature, the latter probably for direct-to-video release.

And more Mixed (Up) Media: Capcom, the Japanese video-game giant, is underwriting the entire cost of the next Jean-Claude Van Damme vehicle, *Street Fighter*, based on their mammothly successful arcade game "Street Fighter 2," with Raul Julia cast as the SFE coverboy's nemesis. Capcom can be relied upon to bring out a game based on the movie based on the game. In a similar vein, Andrew Stevens (remember him as the hemorrhage-including psychic in *The Fury*?) is directing *Gridrunners*, a low-budget sci-fi actioner about a cop whose task is to haul in a malevolent entity that has escaped into the real world from a virtual



Keanu Reeves, fresh from the recent action-picture, *Speed*, stars in William Gibson's cyberpunk saga Johnny Mnemonic. The release is scheduled for early '95.

reality martial arts game; script is by William C. Martell, whose credits include *Ninja Busters* and *Treacherous*.

More news on the Hunk front: Arnold Schwarzenegger will soften his image a bit in *Junior*, where he stars as the world's first pregnant man. (Is this science fiction? Doesn't anybody else remember Billy Crystal in *Rabbit Test*?) Another comedy/fantasy

in the works is *Santa Clause*, with Tim Allen (from TV's *Home Improvement*) as a regular guy type obliged to take over for an ailing Santa Claus.

Lots of director-juggling on Clive Barker's *Candyman 2* has put that one on a slow track, but Barker has plenty of irons on the fire, including *Lord of Illusions*, based on a story from his "Books of Blood," an animated chil-

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dren's project at Paramount called *The Thief of Always*, and, at Miramax, *Hellraiser 4: Bloodlines*.

Miramax is, not incidentally, putting the finishing touches on *Heavenly Creatures* by Peter Jackson of *Dead Alive* fame.

You've already heard that Michael Keaton left *Batman Forever* and Val Kilmer was cast as a replacement. The announcement came within days of the signing of Jim (The Mask) Carrey in a multi-million-dollar deal. Initial accounts reported that Keaton left over money negotiations that had supposedly reached the \$15 million point, not including gross points and a nice piece of merchandising. Some industry insiders estimate that the total take for Keaton might have reached as high as \$35 million. The other side claims that Keaton was more concerned about emphasis on freakish villains in the *Batman* franchise, while leaving the *Batman* character a cypher—a character that anyone in a mask can play.

Which reminds me of what Richard Donner told me when he left *Superman II*, which was then completed by Richard Lester: "What they wanted from Superman all along was a James Bond for 12-year-olds, and that's what they're going to get." Speaking of which, Sidney Furie, director of *Superman 4: The Quest for Peace*, is being allowed to develop another genre film, hopefully with better results—look out for *Star Legion* which is now shooting in Latvia.

Meanwhile, in the aftermath of congressional hearings on children's programming, and Justice Department investigations of violence on television, we hear that the excellent *Batman: The Animated Series* will be less violent, and perhaps less "dark," next year.

Mel Gibson is close to starring in a new version of Ray Bradbury's classic sci-fi novel, *Fahrenheit 451*. The story, to be scripted by Bradbury, takes place in a near-future totalitarian society where the role of fireman is to burn all books—they're outlawed because they encourage free thought. (The title refers to the temperature at which paper burns.) The Warner Bros. film will have Gibson playing Guy Montag, a fireman who eventually rebels and joins an underground group. A previous film adaptation was directed by Francois Truffaut in 1967.

Crypt Keeper Pictures, the outfit behind the HBO and syndicated *Tales From the Crypt* series, has begun production on a series of medium-budget thrillers for theatrical release; first before the cameras is *Demon Knight*, set in a desert hotel under onslaught by an army of demons. The second picture, *Fat Tuesday*, will be set in New Orleans, with a Carnival/voodoo theme.

Fear-fans take note: Stephen King's original screenplay *Red Rose* will be the next project for director Mick Garris, as the pair follow up on the big ratings success of their collaboration on the TV miniseries *The Stand*. Spielberg's Amblin Entertainment awaits King's final revisions as we go to press. □

Continued from page 10

they work around the clock grinding sugar cane in *White Zombie*, airing Tuesday, October 25 at 9 pm ET* and 1 am ET*. A mad scientist plans to kidnap a girl to create an ape woman in *Murders in the Rue Morgue*, airing Wednesday, October 26 at 9 pm ET* and 1 am ET*. A Scotland Yard inspector investigates five drownings and uncovers a monster in *Dark Eyes of London*, airing Thursday, October 27 at 9 pm ET* and 1 am ET*. The undead rise from their graves at night to feed off the living in *Dracula*, airing Friday, October 28, at 9 pm ET* and 1 am ET*.

This fall will also mark the launch of *UFO Diaries*, an exciting new original Sci-Fi Channel series premiering September 25. The show provides an in-depth look at the phenomenon of unidentified flying objects. Public officials, police officers, pilots, armed forces personnel and ordinary citizens come forward with fascinating personal tales and undisputed evidence of their UFO experiences. *UFO Diaries* airs Sundays at 9:30 am ET*, 9:30 pm ET* and 1:30 am ET*, only on Sci-Fi.

Sci-Fi joins the home shopping craze with Sci-Fi Trader, the place on the tube to buy out-of-this-world science fiction and Sci-Fi Channel gear. Tune in to check out new products each week! *Sci-Fi Trader* airs Sundays 11 am ET*, 6:30 pm ET* and 3 am ET*, exclusively on the Sci-Fi Channel.

College students, when you're back on campus, check out the *Rolling Stone Rock and Roll Bowl*, taking place at 25 colleges nationwide this fall. Sci-fi fans will be able to visit the Sci-Fi Channel booth to view TV monitors showcasing galactic coming attractions and out-of-this-world clips and can sign up to participate in the Rock & Roll Bowl Game Competition, an awesome trivia event based on the same concept as the popular game show *Jeopardy!*. Hundreds of students will have a chance to answer trivia questions, including many from an entire category devoted exclusively to science fiction and sci-fi entertainment, in exchange for great prizes. Check your campus newspaper and *Rolling Stone* magazine to see if Sci-Fi is coming to your school!

Computer users: get online to take advantage of more new, improved Sci-Fi Channel online services than ever! These include a new Photo Gallery on Prodigy, the addition of behind-the-scenes series scoops, and the uploading of up-to-the-minute press release information for all users to access. So keep your input coming and we'll continue to respond to your online needs!

Happy Halloween!

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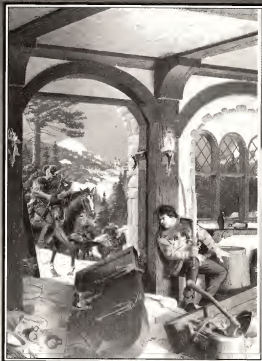
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THE SECRET OF StarGate

BY DENNIS FISCHER

*The Spacefaring Gods of Ancient Egypt
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IN NORTH AFRICA, AROUND 8000 B.C., A group of tribesmen is celebrating when a shadow crosses the moon—an omen. Later that night, the tribe is awakened by a fierce storm. In the midst of the tumult a bright blinding light lures a young artisan until he disappears into its source.

In Gaza, Egypt, 1928, hundreds of Arabs excavating a site where six huge tablets of ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics have been unearthed make another momentous discovery, one that seems particularly eerie and otherworldly: a huge stone ring of unknown purpose and origin.

In present-day Los Angeles, this mystery remains unsolved; enter Daniel Jackson, a renegade Egyptologist who has been shunned for his unorthodox theories and is determined to unlock the secret of the *StarGate*, which he believes to be an incredible device left by a strange, alien civilization, capable of transporting people to another world.

So begins *StarGate*, a \$50-million film that, at least by the yardstick of film economics, is due to be the sci-fi blockbuster of the year. The



In StarGate, we learn that the sun god Ra (Jaye Davidson) not only lives, but rules an ancient and timeless kingdom.





project, executive produced by Mario Kassar (whose past record includes the highly successful *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* and *Total Recall*), is the brainchild of two filmmakers, writer-director Roland Emmerich and writer-producer Dean Devlin, who previously collaborated on *Moon 44* and *Universal Soldier*.

Explains Devlin, "The idea for *StarGate* was originally Roland's idea that he's had since film school. He always wanted to make a movie about the mysteries of Egypt, and who built the great pyramids. I had an idea for a film that took place on another planet. I wanted to do *Lawrence of Arabia* on another planet....

"Roland and I wrote the film together. Roland and I have a unique relationship that happens once in a while in Hollywood, but is very rare. Roland has almost no ego when it comes to his work, and I've never seen anything like that. My father [Don Devlin, of *My Bodyguard* and *The Witches of Eastwick*] was a movie producer for 30 years. I grew up on movie sets. I've never seen a director like Roland before. When it comes to his films, he's really pure about it. It

doesn't matter who says the best idea, if he hears a great idea on the set, he'll use it. It's not about who came up with it or anything like that.

"Very often writers who write movies in Hollywood, once they hand in the script, it's goodbye. And very often producers are *persona non grata* on the set. Roland has welcomed me to every aspect of the film. I was there at every casting session, I was there every day of the shoot. I was there for the editing, the post, the digital, the music scoring. We have a very creative partnership. I think we make each other better filmmakers."

STARGATE IS DEVLIN'S FIRST FILM AS A PRODUCER. HE began working with Emmerich as an actor on the low-budget science fictioner *Moon 44*, where he improvised much of his own dialogue. Emmerich was pleased with Devlin's changes and requested that he write scenes for the other actors as well. Soon Devlin was signed as a writer for Emmerich's production company, Centropolis Films, which



recently produced the Jean Claude Van Damme-Dolph Lundgren teaming *Universal Soldier*.

"I thought for my first producing effort I would do a little bedroom comedy," said Devlin with a laugh, "but it turned out to be *StarGate* instead. Someone told me a long time ago that it was no more difficult to produce a small film than a large film, that all films are incredibly difficult to produce. After producing *StarGate* with my partners, I find that hard to believe!"

The production needed to overcome some incredible obstacles: location shooting in the Yuma desert in 126-degree temperatures; building the largest exterior sets since *The Ten Commandments*; and housing an interior set that was so large that no sound stage in the world could contain it.

"When we began the project," said Devlin, "I shopped it around town and most studios wanted to make the film. The concern was they were budgeting the film at around \$150-200 million. They said it was impossible, you can't make this film for the cost you think you can. But we were



LEFT: Archaeologist Daniel Jackson (*James Spader*) is an awe-struck witness to the court of Ra. **ABOVE:** Jackson encounters a nagada, one of many fantastic beings brought to screen life by Patrick Tatopoulos and his creature crew.

convinced we could make this film within a reasonable budget, and I think we did. For what you get on screen, it's phenomenal."

The first key step was convincing Carolco's Mario Kassar. "He was executive producer on *Universal Soldier*," said Devlin, "and he has a passion for ancient Egypt. He's a collector of Egyptian art, and he immediately identified with the project. When the film was set up at Canal, he was brought on as executive producer. Part of that deal was to have Carolco distribute the film worldwide, and then he was to find a domestic distributor, which became MGM."

For the cast, the filmmakers didn't want to spend their money on a big marquee name whose fee would take up most of the budget. Instead, they opted for talented actors who were willing to take on roles that would be unusual for them.

Daniel Jackson is played by James Spader (*Sex, Lies and Videotape* and *Wolf*). Explains Devlin, "His character is somewhat of a child genius when it comes to languages and translating hieroglyphics. He's dedicated his life to studying the origins of ancient Egyptian civilizations, but the conclusions he's made have caused him to be ostracized from the academic community."

"He's also someone who acts before he thinks about it. He comes to conclusions before he's realized how people are going to react to what he says."

"At the beginning of the film, he's a bit down on his luck. While his ideas are fairly impressive, nobody is paying him any money to hear them. He receives an offer to join a top-secret military program to decipher some ancient hieroglyphics of a type that's never been seen before. When he finally solves the riddle of these hieroglyphics, he learns how to turn on the *StarGate* and open up a doorway to another world on the other side of the galaxy."

Instead of playing his usual rebellious type, Kurt Russell has been cast to play a hard-bitten military commander, Colonel Jack O'Neil, the head of the military team assigned to go over to the other side of the *StarGate* and investigate.

"Colonel O'Neil is a career military officer with a hidden agenda," says Devlin, "something that he doesn't tell the rest of the team, something that could possibly endanger the lives of everyone on board. When the team finds them-



selves stranded on this other planet without a way to get back to Earth, Colonel O'Neil's secret agenda comes directly into conflict with what everybody else needs, which is to find a way to get back home."

In a bit of a casting coup, the filmmakers persuaded Jaye Davidson to take his first role since his Oscar-nominated performance in *The Crying Game*. "Jaye Davidson plays a character that is patterned after one of the earliest Egyptian gods, Ra the Sun God," said Devlin. "He is the ruler of all mankind in that section of the universe, and he is, in fact, the original Pharaoh."

"In ancient Egyptian mythology, it was believed that when a Pharaoh was put to rest in a sarcophagus, he would live forever. In our film, it's quite literally true. If you were to lay in this Pharaoh's sarcophagus, you could live forever. It's like a rejuvenating, healing device."

One of the challenges of the film was to recreate creatures out of Egyptian mythology. These were put in the hands of Patrick Tatopoulos, whose credits include *Bram Stoker's Dracula*, *The Addams Family*, *Star Trek V* and *Demonition Man*. As creature effects supervisor, Tatopoulos needed to create Ra's minions.

Ra's main guard is Anubis, patterned after the jackal-headed boatman of Egyptian mythology who ferries men's souls to "the other shore" after their deaths. Most of Ra's guards are patterned after the hawk-headed Egyptian god Horus.

Said Devlin, "What we discover is that Ra is someone who rules not with a whip and a chain, but with mythology. He manipulates people through belief and through fears and by not allowing education, which is really the main theme of the film: that the real power is not weaponry, but knowledge."

"What our team brings to this other people is the truth, and that empowers people. It's very much a traditional hero myth."

As Alvin Toffler once noted, there are basically three types of power: the power of force, such as threatening people with weapons, which has its limitations; the power of knowledge, which becomes increasingly important in an information-driven age such as ours; and the power of money, such as that which has enabled artists and artisans to create the super spectacle of *StarGate*.

Both Emmerich and Devlin note that the intention



behind *StarGate* is to resurrect the seemingly outmoded genre of the wide-screen epic. Recalls Devlin, "Roland and I went to see a retrospective of films that included *El Cid*, *Ben Hur*, *Cleopatra*, *The Ten Commandments*, all the big epics. Charlton Heston was hosting the event, and he said, 'It's important to have these retrospectives, because these films can never be made again. They're simply too expensive.'

WE THOUGHT, WELL, THAT'S THE CHALLENGE. Of course, we can never be as great as the originals, but if we can somehow capture the spirit, if we can somehow bring the genre back to a generation of people who never experienced them the first time around—who have never even seen them letter boxed, but on television with commercials—then perhaps we could re-energize the genre.

"We tried to push the limit of the theatre-going experience so it's something that you can't really duplicate in your home. You can get close with big screen television and surround sound, but it's not the same. This is a movie that, to really appreciate, you have to see in a theater. The



bigger, the better theater, the better the experience will be."

StarGate contains over 300 optical effects, most of them digital. However, it is the intention of the filmmakers that you won't recognize them as digital effects. Said Devlin, "Our digital effects went into creating environments and surroundings that you have never seen before. Now, hopefully, you won't even know it's a digital effect. There's a mining sequence in the film where you literally see thousands upon thousands of workers working in a mine shaft, but it had to be a pit like we've never seen on Earth, so it was created completely digitally."

The digital effects chores were handled by Jeffrey A. Okun (*Die Hard 2: Die Harder*; *Shocker*) and the Kleiser-Walczak Construction Company. The overall visual effects supervisor on the film is Kit West, who previously handled similar chores on Lucas' *Return of the Jedi* and *Raiders of the Lost Ark*.

What makes digital effects more exciting than say a matte painting is that the filmmakers can put movement into the shot and composite many different images, creating a sort of reality sandwich. According to Devlin, there is one shot which uses 5,000 extras and composites them many different places to populate a model city and create an entirely new environment on a vast scale. The impressive production design is by Holger Gross, art director of the award-winning video for Madonna's "Express Yourself," notable for its updating of German expressionist cinema style, and his team of conceptual artists.

For one interior set, because there wasn't a sound stage big enough, the filmmakers shot under the dome which formerly housed the *Spruce Goose* in Long Beach. Said director Emmerich, "We had some sets that were the biggest in a long time. We had some sets which were 40 or 50 feet high."

To light and photograph these vast expanses, Emmerich turned to his long-time collaborator, Karl Walter Lindenlaub, who in addition to working on *Moon 44* and *Univer-*

OPPOSITE: Jaye Davidson, whose gender-bending performance in The Crying Game was the basis of that film's success, brings a similarly unique quality to his performance as Ra. ABOVE: Colonel Jack O'Neil (Kurt Russell, at far left), head of the top-secret military team investigating the powers of the gate, has his own plans for the exploitation of the astounding discovery.

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Ra questions the purpose of Jackson's visit to his fabled realm.

sal Soldier with Emmerich has also shot *CB4*, *Ghost Chase* and *Eye of the Storm*. To capture one city shot in all its splendid detail, Emmerich had Lindenlaub place his camera on a special set-up.

"We used a remote control crane and we built these cranes up, so the crane could go up or down," explains Emmerich. "In an exterior setting, we had a crane shot that was 58 feet of crane movement downward, which was very hard to do. Normally, you have to use a kind of cable device and you have camera control there, motion control there, and have to do this thing in and out in two hours. We put the crane on a scaffolding tower something like 31 or 32 feet, and brought it down." The result, he promises, is a spectacular descent into this alien culture.

Emmerich also describes the StarGate effect itself as being the most expensive effect in the movie. "It is half-light and half-water and half-moving water," he said. "It's found at the beginning of the movie and then they put it somewhere and hope they can make it work. They're really afraid that something might come through, so they put it in the safest place they have, the bottom of a mine shaft. We have a lot of digital effects in there, and we try to blend them in so that people won't see them.

"That is my goal. Everybody said, yeah, but no one will see them, and I said, yeah, but they will see. You're not supposed to know they are effects, but when you see a 600-foot pristine pyramid, you know we obviously didn't build that."

When engaged, the StarGate ring develops a unique surface which seems almost organic and alive. Suddenly, it expands in a great bubble which pops and creates a vortex which sucks the travelers into it and transports them to another part of the galaxy.

Of course, filming in a desert environment presented many problems. With a crew that included as many as 450 people, plus thousands of extras, the production downed an average of 60,000 gallons of water a day. A whole sys-

tem had to be developed to supply everyone with the much-needed bottled water—there were too many to go to a single site to quench their thirst, so a series of runners was hired to constantly move from area to area supplying people with water.

It was possible to dehydrate in those intense temperatures. A member of the production noted that it was possible to drink 16 bottles of water a day and still never need to go to the bathroom. Huge air-conditioned tents needed to be set up for people to eat lunch in, and roads had to be built to transport busloads of extras to the remote location.

RECALLED EMMERICH, "THE FIRST DAY WAS TOUGH; IN a stone quarry there we painted a background 600 feet wide and 200 feet high, and we painted the whole thing black. Then we sent 1600 people in there and 2000 fake people, dummies which we called stick people, and we put them all in there, and that was our first shooting day which everyone had predicted would be a disaster, but it went great!"

Devlin also recalled the day. "We were hoping to have 3,000 extras and only 1,500 showed up, so instantly our people started making these stick figures to put in the back of the shot. All the real extras were put in front of the shot. We positioned them on the top of each dune, and in the valleys there was nobody because you couldn't see them anyway. It looks like a line of people that goes on for miles and miles and is one of the most spectacular shots in the film, and it was a day we thought was going to be disastrous. That's Roland Emmerich thinking fast on his feet, saying how are we going to solve this problem, how do we make it work?"

Another problem faced by the production was the difficulty of dealing with dune buggies. One set of dune buggy tracks would ruin an entire shot because even if there were tracks two miles away, they could be seen clearly, and all the cleanup in the world ended up looking fake.

Said Devlin, "We found out that you can't clean a dune. We tried helicopters, but they just make big ditches. We tried wind machines, but they take forever and don't really do it. The only thing that makes a dune that looks like a dune is time.

"We would set up a shot, a dune buggy would go over a hill, and we'd have to move. Things like that became frustrating and crazy, but somehow we managed to get through it all."

Additionally, since Yuma is a national park, it couldn't be damaged, so the production had to be very meticulous about leaving it clean and unchanged. There could be no trace of *StarGate* left for future park visitors.

In summing up the film, Devlin notes, "This movie is like an onion where we slowly peel back each level. Each time you peel something back, another mystery comes forward. Then that gets resolved and another mystery appears.

"It's the discovery of the StarGate, of the hieroglyphics on the StarGate, then it's the discovery of how to turn it on. It's the discovery of going through it, what's on the other side, what they encountered, the strange people, the strange creatures, the strange environment. Each one leads to the next. But every time you open one door, three more doors are in front of you.

"If our film works, you'll have a different kind of draw, a different kind of thing to grab the audience, rather than just explosions."

Is there room in big-budget science fiction filmmaking for a movie which replaces mindless action with awe, spectacle, and wonder? The trip through *StarGate* this November may provide the answer. □

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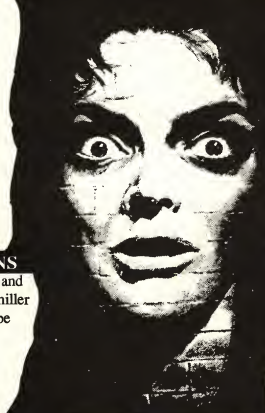
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CHANGES ARE THE ORDER OF THE DAY FOR THE SERIES, WHICH CAME VERY near to cancellation last season. The joint venture of Universal Television, Steven Spielberg's Amblin' Television and NBC, *SeaQuest DSV* was given a new lease on life based upon the promise of a complete overhaul by its producers and creators.

The most immediate change is the series' relocation to a new home base in Orlando, Florida, allowing *SeaQuest DSV* to take on an entirely new look. "Locating in Florida there are going to be a lot more magnificent exteriors," says Les Shelton, consulting producer of the series. "It will help us add to the adventure aspect of this show... and we won't be trapped in the submarine while doing it. The exterior shots will allow us to explore interesting colonies and new generations of people. Now we can show their lifestyles, the vehicles they drive, the situations they've created for themselves in their housing and their exteriors.

We'll see what the new upworld looks like without having to talk about it or see it on a read-out screen.



What happens when a terrible misuse of progress and technical know-how puts the world in jeopardy? What happens when a colony of prisoners from the future gets wildly out of control? The answers will be part of the new season of SeaQuest.

New Life For SeaQuest

BY RICHARD MINTZER

We can now build stories around those types of things, so it'll be much more open-blue-skies adventure, mixed with the science fiction element and our vision of the future."

The show's publicist at NBC, Curt King, adds that beyond the obvious availability of the ocean, Florida is rich with streams and a variety of waterways and coastal regions that will increase the number of available sites in which to shoot the water-based show. "They can go out on location and find all sorts of shallow ponds, as well as interesting settings and backdrops," adds King. "It'll be a much more out-of-the-studio and out-of-the-submarine type of show this year."

Beyond the physical relocation are the new characters joining the *SeaQuest*. Lieutenant James Brody will add a very strong military presence with his non-nonsense gutsy attitude. He's a leader with a lot of passion and a tremendous sense of pride.

Tony Piccolo, perhaps on the other side of the coin, is the blond-haired surfer type "daredevil" of the crew, always looking for life's next great thrill. His free time may be spent bungee-jumping or diving for some bizarre deep-sea treasure. His expertise in various technical areas puts him in an important role on the ship, but Tony is not like all the others. The first several episodes of the new season will divulge the secret that makes him so unique.

The new *SeaQuest* will also have a new doctor on board. Dr. Diane Page, in her late 20s, is attractive, young, and up-to-date on every new medicine and treatment of the future. A strong-willed woman, she takes her responsibility to the *SeaQuest* very seriously.

So does Loni Henderson, another new young crew member, whose expertise is in parapsychology. She has the ability to pick up on people's thoughts, find out why they function as they do, why they do what they do, what's really going through their minds and what they're feeling. As Shelton explains: "She takes what we know about parapsychology now and escalates it by 20 years, which leads us to some incredibly frightening insights in that area."

The fusion of old and new crew members allows for a lot of interesting interactions within the crew itself. Says Shelton: "These new characters are so driven and have so

much spark, there's got to be some conflict between them and the existing crew. We're going to have some adventurous situations within the show just among the people. As for the audience, we're waiting to see how they adjust to this new *SeaQuest*. ...and by the way, we actually have a new *SeaQuest* since the last one exploded and sank at the end of the season."

The year now is 2021 and although the new *SeaQuest* features more advanced technological equipment, the hardware is no longer at the forefront of the show. "We're going to present a real collision-course, episodic type of television, where each course leads you to the next avenue," promises Shelton. "The show is clearly going to move forward at a much quicker pace and with much more conflict. There will be more science fiction elements added to create that conflict, but much of the attention will be focused around human drama and interaction."

FOR EXAMPLE, SHELTON talked about one forthcoming episode, in which the *SeaQuest* discovers a colony of prisoners of the future. "It's interesting because we have to explore if these people are real, what their motives are and who's controlling them. Beyond technology are the human questions of what to do with them and who's responsible. We're dealing with a peaceful new world, so no one wants to be responsible for that peace being disrupted."

Also added to the series will be a greater emphasis on the UEO, The United Earth Oceans, and its political power. "We're going into totally new areas delving into conflicts within the UEO, questioning if it's gotten too powerful and if it's turning into a dictatorship. Is all of this, originally intended to create a peaceful world, coming back to bite us? Are there elements in fact within the UEO

that had a different agenda—are they trying to turn this into a more dictatorial situation, therefore being in direct conflict with the *SeaQuest* and their mission? All this will be addressed and the *SeaQuest* will be forced into more battles because of the conflicts within the UEO." But it's more than new characters, a faster pace, a new location, new uni-



forms and the UEO that will bring about a fresh *SeaQuest*. It's also very much the psychological approach, an approach Shelton takes very seriously. "We'll be dealing with the beauty of what we've learned from the past, the things we're living with right now, and what we've learned from them. We're moving forward in terms of how people relate to one and another...their views and how they understand things."

"This season the future is the emphasis, the people and how they will act and react in a world 27 years from now—which is just around the corner. It makes the show very relevant to what's happening in the real world today. We're actually creating a future that's almost within people's grasp."

One such genius of this "near future," is 19-year-old Lucas (Jonathan Brandis), who will be involved in most of the story lines, from his perspective as a youth and a teenager. Says Brandis, "Lucas is going to mature a lot this season and learn a lot about himself." As for Brandis, he's learned a lot as well. "I no longer feel like I'm flying blind,



Photo: Doug Mann

like I did when I first came on the show," he says. Now I feel very comfortable, in fact, I'm even co-writing one of the season's [22 scheduled] episodes. I feel at home with the cast and Roy [Scheider] has taught me a lot, like how to act in a more military manner."

As for Roy Scheider, unlike his female costar of the premier season, Stephanie Beacham, he will return to the helm as Captain Bridger, once again the commander from which this new, younger *SeaQuest* crew will take their orders as they set their sights on the future.

Scheider has likened his role to that of Captain Nemo in Jules Verne's novel *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*. "Both of them are philosophers, scientists and humanists," he says. "Their basic motivation is not military. They are both men who want to go and see something undiscovered." As for his leadership role, Scheider finds his character has a "preoccupation with ocean research and his occupation is that of commander of the *SeaQuest*, which is his laboratory."

Returning for his second season as the pro-

gram's behind-the-scenes scientific consultant is Dr. Robert Ballard, the famed ocean scientist, best known for discovering the sunken *Titanic* and battleship *Bismark*. He consults with the producers on new discoveries and new experimentation that is currently being done and how they might be utilized in *SeaQuest's* future. The producers then decide whether or not to work such discoveries into the *SeaQuest's* adventures. According to Shelton, "Ballard's instrumental when it comes to all the scientific stuff. He's discovering new things every day. He's actually doing for real what we're doing on the show—without the action-adventure part, of course."

The US Navy is also assisting in keeping the *SeaQuest* hierarchy abreast of the latest in oceanography and (to some extent) military strategies of the future although no one connected with *SeaQuest* would say specifically what the Navy does, or does not, divulge to the program.

Steven Spielberg remains involved as one of the show's producers, and although he's

PREVIOUS PAGES: The original SeaQuest, destroyed in the final show of the last season. Amblin' reports that the new ship's external design will remain essentially the same. Fans of that lovable dolphin Darwin, opposite, can rest assured that the aquatic star will return with the new season. ABOVE: Roy Scheider as Captain Bridger, soon to be ensconced in a new set, commanding an expanded SeaQuest crew.

busy with *Zorro* and numerous other upcoming projects, his input is, as Shelton puts it, "always interesting and his ideas are extremely productive." Jonathan Brandis summed up Spielberg's involvement more simply by adding, "I respect everything he does. He's a god."

So with Lord Spielberg watching over them, the *SeaQuest* sets out for new action oriented, science fiction encounters geared at a younger audience, with a faster pace and more off-ship adventures and from a new location. Basically it's the new, improved *SeaQuest*, bigger, bolder, brighter and better. □



The quest for a new world begins here in an orbiting space colony high above Earth.

Spielberg's Earth 2

BY RICHARD MINTZER

Steven Spielberg's latest sci-fi saga brings future "frontier life" to television.

IT'S 200 YEARS FROM NOW, AND Earth has hit hard times. Years of unchecked population growth have taken their toll in pollution and poverty. The over-taxed planet is partially relieved by a series of orbiting space colonies, but these artificial worlds offer an imperfect imitation of Earth's environment. Many colonists, particularly children, are physically debilitated by the sterile, hothouse atmosphere.

On one particular space station resides a scientist with a mission. Devon Adair is organizing an expedition to explore an Earthlike planet some 22 light-years away, hoping to find a new home for all of Earth's overflow, but especially for Ulysses, the scientist's son, whose health is growing steadily worse.

Adair gathers a nine-person crew, including crack mechanic John Danzinger, with his pre-teen daughter, True; the ship's doctor, Julia Stern; an insightful cyborg named Yale; brilliant space pilot Alonzo Solace; government liaison Morgan Martin, and his wife, Bess. Together, and counter to government orders, they embark upon the Eden Project; their goal is to settle on the planet in an area they have researched and called New Pacifica. Once settled, they can begin a new civilization and heal the ailing children.

Unfortunately, the mission goes awry when their ship crash-lands on the planet, thousands of miles from the temperate area they had targeted. Their ship destroyed, they set off through the wastes of the planet they've called Earth 2, to

make their way to the promised land of New Pacifica.

According to Amblin' Entertainment publicist Vic Heutschy, "the emphasis is less on space and technology and more on what this new world presents in terms of creatures, perils and the discord it creates among its nine new inhabitants—10 if you count the lone remaining robot that survives the crash."

Shot entirely in the Santa Fe region of New Mexico, *Earth 2* has been described as a John Ford Western 200 years in the future. The magnificent backdrops of the desert, particularly Utah's Bryce Canyon, and the nearby sound stages of Garson Studios, were recently used in the films *City Slickers II* and *Wyatt Earp*. The same sound stages, and five additional locations, have been used in making the two-hour premier movie that will be the series send-off, now scheduled for broadcast in late October. Amblin' and Universal intend to mount the entire 20 episodes for the debut season on the same grand scale.

The crew will set forth on their transplanetary trek in a giant red transrover, somewhat like a dune buggy, and fully equipped with high-tech essentials for digging, building, hunting, and self-defense. In their travels, the crew will meet up with other-worldly sentient species; the Kobas will soon befriend the group, while the Terrians, an underground tribe, will be decidedly hostile. They will also encounter the more nomadic Crendlers, who are desert scavengers.

Greg Cannom, Oscar winner for *Bram Stoker's Dracula* and again for *Mrs. Doubtfire*, is busily designing and

building all the creatures for the premier show with his crack team. As the series goes into production, Cannom will be billed as "creature consultant" to his hand-picked crew, while he simultaneously heads the special makeup crew for *Batman Forever*. The production team of Michael Duggan, Carol Flint and Mark Levin co-created *Earth 2* and co-wrote its premier episode. Duggan's production resume includes *Law & Order*, *Crime & Punishment* and *Miami Vice*; while Levin was a co-producer on the ABC sitcom *The Wonder Years*; Flint was producer of *China Beach*. What united these three was a mutual fondness for the world of SF, and a desire to create a large-scale sci-fi epic for the small screen.

"The trek of our characters is analogous to America's movement westward and how the wilderness was settled" explains Duggan, who adds, "We want to suggest, without preaching, that this is mankind's future, and if we're smart we won't make the same mistakes again."

Duggan says that the show will fuse together "all the things that make a great action show and great science fiction. But what distinguishes us from other science fiction shows is a focus on the people and the human element."

"It's a situation where a bunch of aliens land and come out to explore," says Levin, "except we're the aliens in a whole world that already exists."

Antonio Sabato, Jr. plays Solace, the pilot, as a romantic figure, "a loner who's always looking for new and exciting things in life."

Clancy Brown, who plays Danziger,

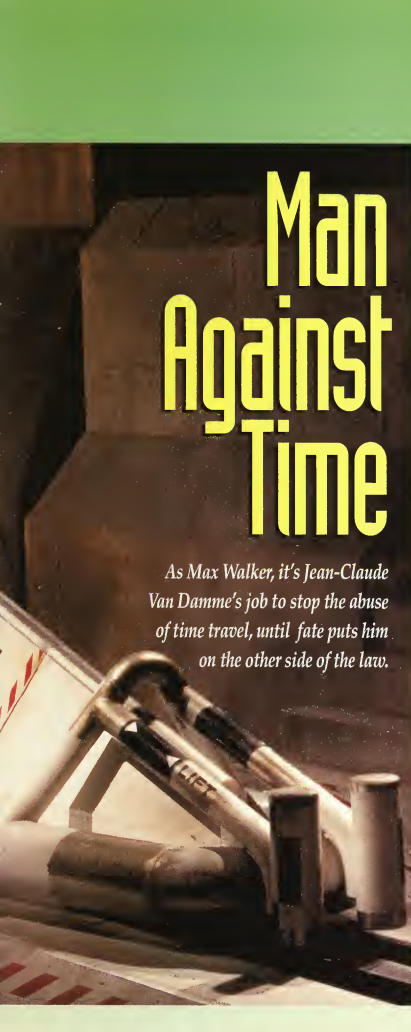
includes among his credits *The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai*, *Highlander*, and John Darabont's Stephen King adaptation *The Shawshank Redemption*. Brown describes Danziger as an energetic leader who, along with Adair, tries to keep a sense of cohesion in the group. "He's really a regular guy; the most important thing in his life is his daughter, but he also feels the whole group needs to be taken care of." The greatest task to be faced by the group, says Brown, will be surviving as a group, and getting along with one another.

But the Moses of this group is Devon Adair, who spearheads the Eden Project. While rumors have circulated for close to a year that *Star Trek* producer Rick Berman has been pushing Paramount brass to allow a woman commander on the *Voyager*, Spielberg and Universal have apparently beat *Trek* to the punch by casting Debrah Farentino, familiar to television audiences from her lead role in the series *Equal Justice*. Farentino believes the show's primary goal is to make people think about the future and how we can best prepare for it. She anticipates her character making great strides as a pioneer woman of the future.

And great strides will be expected; *Earth 2* is scheduled to precede *SeaQuest DSV* on the Sunday night NBC lineup, and a strong lead-in could turn things around for Amblin's other SF adventure series, providing a strong two-hour block of science fiction television every Sunday night. That would be good for Amblin', Universal and NBC; and great for science fiction fans. □

Encased in a launch pod, the time enforcement officers set out on a mission to restore the delicate balance of the time-space continuum.





Man Against Time

As Max Walker, it's Jean-Claude Van Damme's job to stop the abuse of time travel, until fate puts him on the other side of the law.

PURSUIT AND APPREHENSION of time-jumping criminals is one thing, a noble duty applauded by every good citizen; but solving your own wife's murder by entering the past—and thereby breaking the laws of nature and man—is a whole other animal.

Yet that's the ethical dilemma facing Max Walker, our chiseled, muscle-flexing hero personified by Jean-Claude Van Damme for the new \$30-million science fiction action thriller *Timecop*.

"Time travel is illegal," notes screenwriter Mark Verheiden. "And for the timecops, they're prohibited from doing anything but their assigned mission. If a timecop is sent back to the year of his senior prom and he remembers his senior prom was a disaster and wants to tell his younger self to 'go and do this, you'll have a better time,' that's illegal and punishable by death. Timecops are sent back specifically to either prevent or fix up disasters that have happened because bad people have somehow gotten hold of a very expensive piece of time travel machinery and gone back."

Both the film and comic book were created simultaneously as a collaboration between Dark Horse Comics publisher Mike Richardson and Verheiden. "We did the treatment for the movie and had thoughts for the comic book around the same time," recalls Verheiden. "The comic book story came out about two years ago, but that wasn't the movie story at all. We did use all the characters and introduced a lot of the devices that are in the movie, but we kept our core idea for the movie."

While *Timecop*'s script has floated around Hollywood since 1990, it was producers Sam Raimi and Rob Tapert's interest which finally pushed the film forward into production.

"These things aren't easy but it always amazed me that people didn't jump on this sooner," says Verheiden. "I pitched it maybe

BY TANYA ANN FLETCHER

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ABOVE: Officers Walker (Van Damme) and Fielding (Gloria Reuben) prepare to hurtle 10 years into the past. FAR RIGHT: Van Damme matches blades with a knife-wielding thug from the past.

20 or 25 times, and when we finally got Sam Raimi and Rob Tapert interested, we were picked up to go into development. They have a very neat enthusiasm for the projects they're involved with. I've done other projects with producers who have been enthusiastic, but they bring a real sort of fun toward their work and it shows with their movies. Even if you watch the television show *Hercules*, for better or for worse, that's the Raimi-Tapert sensibility coming across there."

Though there was early talk of

Raimi (best known for his *Evil Dead* series) directing the project, Peter Hyams was eventually given the reins of the sci-fi action epic. "Hyams basically wanted to make the characters a bit more urban and to give an intense reality to the political figure played by Ron Silver in the movie," says Verheiden. "He also wanted to make sure the science fiction aspect was understandable and easy to watch. Obviously, after *Outland* and *2010* [both directed by Hyams] he's not unfamiliar with special effects, action and that sort of thing."

Finding the perfect muscle-clad action star wasn't difficult, and Van

Damme signed on shortly after Hyams. "We never had anyone specifically in mind when we wrote it, but when Jean-Claude came aboard, we did heighten some of the action material in it because of course he's very good at it. And there always was action in the movie—that was always a given. We just tailored it more to his specific abilities; you tailor a movie to your actor. If Dustin Hoffman had come aboard we would have tailored it to him. There's no harm in tailoring the structure of the film to the strengths of your lead. So what that means in real terms? In *Timecop* we took some of the gun action that was



in the script and made it more physical, and I have to say I was very happy with the way it played during the rough cut I saw."

The fact that Van Damme does his own action theatrics also impressed Verheiden when he saw some of the action star's footage cut together. "I'll tell you, Jean-Claude is the real article when it comes to these physical stunts. There's one scene where he does a full split in midair, by supporting himself on two kitchen counters. That's pretty impressive. There's another moment when a

guy is holding him in a bearhug and Jean-Claude runs up the wall and flips clear over the guy and ends up behind him."

With all the alterations most scripts endure through development, Verheiden is pleased that *Timecop* retains most of its original conception. The story still focuses on cop Max Walker, who must go back to his past, circa 1985, and stop the machinations of Senator Aaron McComb (Silver), whose manipulation of the past could cause his eventual election to the office of president. This poses further conflict when it coincidentally happens to be the same time period when Walker's

wife was murdered.

"Max is faced with the problem of whether he will take care of this corrupt politician or will he overcome the hurdles and save his wife's life," says Verheiden. "There are actually two characters for Max Walker here; one is Max Walker prior to his wife's death, and that's a friendly, open and concerned fellow; and then there's the Max Walker 10 years after his wife has been murdered. That man is a little dead around the middle, and doesn't really care too much about anything except his job. And it's actually a bit of an acting challenge. They really are two specific and different characters and those two characters play against each other in the film. The innocent guy plays off this darker guy who has become embittered."

While scene-chewing villains are commonplace in action movies, Verheiden wanted to give Silver's character more depth. "I always saw him as a sort of quintessential political animal and we actually discussed his motivation quite a bit when we were working on the script," says Verheiden. "This guy was motivated by the quest for power. That is important because he does things that look like they're strictly greedy, like going into the past and murdering an old partner in a computer company because he knows that company is going to become hugely successful, the new

"There's Max Walker prior to his wife's death, and Max Walker 10 years after his wife's murder... really two specific characters who play against each other in the film."



ABOVE: Hyams' crew prepares to capture a scene in the Time Enforcement Command control room, the central dispatching office for all T.E.C. missions. OPPOSITE: Jean Claude "aims" to deliver top-notch action to legions of thrill-movie fans.

Microsoft—but he only needs that money to finance his campaign for president. I don't want Republicans to beat me up, but I patterned him after Bob Dole—not in the sense that Bob Dole would go back and murder his partner and all that kind of stuff, but Bob Dole strikes me as very flinty-eyed and determined about realistic things he will do and what it takes to accomplish his goals."

Max Walker and Senator McComb butt heads when McComb decides to shut down the time enforcement commission after he's used it for his own ends. "The senator is the head of the Senate committee that finances the commission and he seems to have a real grudge against the committee and wants to shut it down. But Walker discovers his plan during his first mission in the film, which involves Walker

going back to stop a stock market manipulation in 1929 that's been engineered from the future," explains Verheiden.

While Van Damme has generally carried his vehicles as a solo action hero (with a notable exception in the Dolph Lundgren adversarial pairing in 1992's *Universal Soldier*), *Timecop* supplies a colorful array of supporting characters. Verheiden particularly appreciates Bruce McGill's performance in the role of Walker's buddy and commanding officer, Captain Matuzack.

"Bruce is very funny," admits Verheiden. "I'm surprised how funny he played the lines and how that worked. It's not really comic relief; his lines are intended to be sardonic. He's not a clown, he does have serious moments. It's also nice having the captain as Van Damme's buddy rather than having that 'McCloud' relationship with his mean captain—McCloud saves New York from a nuclear terrorist and his

captain yells 'you damn idiot.' I didn't want to do that kind of relationship because it's old. It's also frustrating to watch. A little of it goes a long way."

The sex appeal factor also heats up with the casting of Gloria Reuben as Van Damme's female partner Agent Fielding. "She actually gets to fight," reveals Verheiden. "And that must have been an interesting proposition for Van Damme. She definitely gives Jean-Claude a little run for the money."

ONE OF VERHEIDEN'S ESSENTIAL tasks in the screenplay was to determine a plausible set of rules that would allow time travel to work in the *Timecop* universe, without creating a tangled paradoxical knot of pasts and futures. "It took several months of going back and forth between Mike and me before we finally were able to set up a number of rules because, especially with time



from anyway," says Verheiden. "So there is this holding device that when you release it, you're dragged back toward the time stream and return to your own time."

Rule #3: You can't physically come into contact with yourself.

"You can be in the same time period with yourself but if you physically touch your other self, something terrible happens," hints Verheiden. "Basically, don't meet yourself for a drink and pat yourself on the back because something awful will happen. I won't give anything away but something like that just *might* happen in the movie." [Sly grin.]

Timecop is Verheiden's second big film this summer; the James Carrey comedy *The Mask*, also based on a Dark Horse comic, was taken through an early draft by Verheiden as well. "I did a rewrite in the spring of 1991, before [director Chuck Russell] came in and took things in his own direction," recalls Verheiden. "In my draft, I had upped the comedy, the craziness and the cartoony stuff. I think I also added a few things structurally in terms of the relationship between his friends. I also suggested the 'Cuban Pete' dance sequence, even sending them the Desi Arnaz 'Cuban Pete' song. The original draft was a more gangster-oriented movie; we toned that down and tried more for the craziness of what happens to you when you put on the mask."

The appealing factor of *The Mask* for Verheiden was the idea that everyone fantasizes about putting on a different facade that allows you to escape responsibility for consequences. "This is standard wish-fulfillment fantasy; I think *The Mask* tapped into that real well," he says. "The mask is also a form of revenge. It allows you to have pay back for life's indignities by getting back at all those people who have caused you grief in the past."

Verheiden's own greatest professional grief was his first screen credit, a forgettable piece of action-trash entitled *Terror Squad*, featuring Chuck Connors. "It was even rewritten," Verheiden recalls. "The only thing left of mine was the title and I'm not even particularly proud of that."

With his brief Hollywood experience tainting his outlook on that business, Verheiden found greater freedom when his friend Richardson started up Dark Horse in 1986, and Verheiden was asked to pitch some ideas for comics. He came up with *The American*, the story of a mythic hero, a Rambo-styled anti-terrorist who turns out to be a government fraud—which Richardson instantly loved.

Of course, writing for comics and the movies are two different forms, grants Verheiden, who actually finds it very difficult to switch back and forth between the two mediums. "In a movie, things move and so if you want someone to go to the other side of a door, you just write it into the script, but in a comic you have to break it down into panels and you have to establish where the character is each time. A tiny bit of action might be one line in a movie script but in a comic book it might be two whole pages. Comic books also allow you to write what's inside a character's head with captions and balloons, which you truly can't do in movies unless you want to have some really tedious voice-over narration."

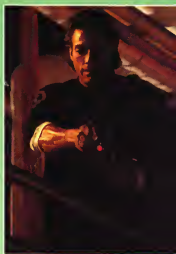
A third screen credit is coming up for Verheiden this year, this one on the small screen—he recently completed a rewrite on the direct-to-video release *Die, Darkman, Die*, where his mission was to capture the subtleties of "that *Darkman* sensibility."

"That's the hard part, because he's not the Phantom of the Opera, he's not Superman, he's sort of his own guy. There's a weird parameter in there and finding it is the trick."

Live projects that could go into production in the near future include an original action script entitled *Atlas*, and a rewrite he's doing for a science fiction movie entitled *Virus* that "plays with your perceptions about what a computer virus can and cannot do," according to the writer.

"It's been really great lately, especially with two big movies coming out this summer," says Verheiden. "My involvement with *The Mask* has only been peripheral, but if *The Mask* is as good as it's expected to be, I'm very proud of whatever part of my contributions remain. And *Timecop* looks like it will be a good action movie, so they're both movies I can be proud of."

"In fact, it really is kind of fun to actually have a couple finally get made—and the best part is they don't star Chuck Connors." □



"Don't meet yourself for a drink and pat yourself on the back, because something awful will happen. I won't give anything away, but something like that just might happen."

travel movies, rules are so important," says Verheiden. "If you don't specify when you can go somewhere and how you can get there, time travel becomes almost like magic and we didn't want this to be like magic. We wanted there to be jeopardy and consequences for the time travel act."

Thus, the guidelines consist of the following:

Rule #1: You can only travel into your own past but not into the future.

"Our feeling was, that the future for you doesn't exist yet," explains Verheiden. "However, someone from your future can come back and hit you on the head and do whatever they want to do."

Rule #2: Time is not on your side and no matter where you visit in the past, the present always wants to suck you right back to where you belong.

"Our feeling was, you're sort of a man out of time and there are natural forces of gravity—time gravity—that drag you back to where you came

Standing at the Center of the Universe

Gene Roddenberry is gone, but Star Trek continues—

And Rick Berman carries the torch.





WHEN RICK BERMAN FIRST MET GENE RODDENBERRY just over eight years ago, he was a young television producer, just "kicked upstairs" to the executive suite. As vice president in charge of longform and special projects for Paramount Television, part of Berman's job was to oversee the development of a new Roddenberry project, a series based on the old *Star Trek* television show.

Early in the process of developing the series, Roddenberry invited Berman to lunch. At that lunch, Roddenberry convinced Berman to give up the life of a studio executive to again become a hands-on producer.

It was a gamble. There was no guarantee that a new *Star Trek* series would work, especially given the uneven box office performance of the *Trek* films; and, at that time, there were few notable successes

"We've begun casting series regulars for *Star Trek: Voyager*, and we're in the stages of rewriting the pilot script and putting together all the production and scheduling on that...and we're starting to have discussions about another *Star Trek* movie...."

among syndicated weekly dramatic shows. The new series, in genuine *Star Trek* tradition, would be breaking new ground.

As Roddenberry had calculated he would, Berman rose to the bait, signing on as producer of *Star Trek: The Next Generation* and quickly rising in the ranks to supervising producer and finally co-executive producer (with Michael Piller) of the series. In 1992, Berman again partnered with Piller as co-creator and co-executive producer of *Deep Space Nine*.

When we spoke with Berman, he was in the midst of multiple production schedules and, though Paramount's *Trek* secrets have been very poorly kept, the lid of secrecy was still officially in place on both the motion picture and the new television series, *Star Trek: Voyager*. By the time that this article reaches the newsstands, *Entertainment Tonight* should be initiating another round of *Trek* hoopla with the first announcement of the *Voyager* cast and other still-secret series details.

While it's impossible for a magazine to compete with the immediacy of the electronic media, we can at least try to surpass their level of intimacy. In the following interview, we attempted less gathering of hard facts, in order to better explore Berman's general take on *Star Trek's* past, present, and future, and to get to know the man who is now the standard-bearer for the current generation of *Trek* devotees.

Sci Fi Entertainment: So, how does it feel to stand at the center of the "*Star Trek* Universe?"

Rick Berman: It's a little scary—there are just so many things going on at once...I just managed to squeak in a week's vacation,



The Known Facts: *Star Trek Voyager*

S*tar Trek: Voyager* was first announced in late October of 1993, as the flagship program of a new television network to be formed by Paramount in partnership with Chris Craft Industries. At this writing, with *Voyager* the only programming announced so far, nearly 90 percent of American households will be reached by stations already signed up. The 10 percent gap will surely be narrowed considerably by the *Voyager's* January debut.

As reported in *USA Today*, the series' two-hour pilot will concern a crew of Federation officers on board the *USS Voyager*, in pursuit of a band of "maquis" (renegade Federation officers) on board another Federation vessel. The chase leads both vessels into The Badlands, a region with a reputation similar to that of the present-day Bermuda Triangle. As the

result of a unique astronomical phenomenon (sounds to us like a wormhole), both ships are hurled to the far side of the galaxy, so distant that a lifetime at max warp would not be sufficient to bring them home. By the end of the pilot, the crews of the two ships will have banded together, to set out in search of the appropriate twitch in space that will bring them all safely home.

In a later TV Guide report, Berman promised "completely new aliens in completely new parts of space." Two of the regular characters in the series will be native to this distant part of the galaxy; Michael Piller, in an appearance on the QVC channel, said that this couple will consist of an exquisitely lovely female with a life span of seven years, and a wizened little old man. Another exotic character will be the holographic ship's doctor, who will only appear in scenes set in the ship's holodeck. A middle-aged male Vulcan character is planned, as well as a female half-human, half-Klingon (said to have some identity problems). Four series

regulars will be human, including one Asian-American and one Native American character. Berman has acknowledged a possibility that a *New Generation* character may show up on the crew list. Of course, all details concerning the *Voyager* crew are subject to change in the course of series development, particularly by the casting process itself.

The *USS Voyager* is described as a "Voyager-Class" ship, holding approximately 200 people, about one-fifth the complement of TNG's *Enterprise-D*. This "leaner, meaner" configuration harkens back to the size of the original *Enterprise*—a ship chartered primarily for scientific exploration.

Michael Piller, quoted in the *Knight-Ridder* news wire, confirms that the new show will, in some respects, more sharply resemble the original series. "Those guys in Kirk's ship were alone out there," he said. "There weren't that many people in space. We've gotten to feel it's too crowded—we catapult a ship to an entirely virgin area of space, all the aliens we've never met."



Darryl Fuchs

which was all I was able to grab, and came back to the heaviest part of post production on the movie. There were always tight deadlines on this movie, and now we're scrambling to meet both the deadlines for opticals and editing. At the same time, we've begun casting series regulars for *Star Trek: Voyager*, and we're in the stages of rewriting the pilot script and putting together all the production and scheduling on that. We're already working on the third script of the season for *Deep Space Nine*; and we're starting to have discussions about another *Star Trek* movie.... So it's all kind of happening simultaneously, and it's a little bit of sensory overload at times.

But as far as standing at the center of it, if one of my responsibilities is to carry the torch for Roddenberry, to keep *Star Trek* honest, to keep it of a quality that it's always been, that's something I'm proud of, and something that I believe we've continued to do—in great part due to the relatively remarkable people that I've managed to gather around myself, who often make me look very good.

SFE: So you don't feel burdened or confined by *Star Trek* history?

Berman: I think that anybody who writes within a specific structure or franchise has to deal with that, the same as if one were dealing with historical material. We have all kinds of rules that we have to follow to remain true to the technology and nomenclature of the physical elements of *Star Trek*; and we have a



ABOVE: Another film rumor has Data becoming so human that he uses contractions, like his evil twin Lore, seen here in "*Descent, Part II*." (Say it is not so!) **LEFT:** The Next Generation episodes, "*Unification, Parts I and II*," were dedicated to the late Gene Roddenberry, and featured Leonard Nimoy in what seems likely to be his final performance as Spock.

lot of very serious fans who expect the quality and the believability and the historical continuity to remain the same. I think that makes it really more interesting for us; I very much enjoy that.

SFE: What about the fans who demand a certain amount of purity? That are concerned that

Trek stay Trek?

Berman: I think it is important that we "stay honest," and it's nice to know that there are a lot of people out there who are not going to let you get away with any nonsense.

SFE: But isn't the question "what would Gene do?" unanswerable? Gene Roddenberry is gone.

Berman: We don't really spend much time saying "what would Gene do?" We don't know what Gene would do—it's like learning a language; once you're good enough at the language, you don't say, "now, am I conjugating this verb correctly?" We know the language....

Once in a while we will say, "Gene would find this unaccept-



ABOVE: *Deep Space Nine's* Odo (Rene Auberjonois), a shape-shifter whose natural state resembles warm apricot juice, is frequently nettled by Quark (Armin Shimerman), the Ferengi who runs the local bar. RIGHT: Producer-creator Rick Berman. OPPOSITE: The next "away" mission planned for the crew of *The Next Generation* will be on the big screen.



able." Usually, that's when we're dealing with something that we're going to lose, or that we're going to fix. But it's not as if we're sitting around second-guessing ourselves in terms of what Gene would do. It's never been the case, even when Gene was alive and involved in the show.

SFE: It's hard for me to ask this, because it's a pretty negative question: A fan recently said to me that the reason *The Next Generation* was canceled was that Berman and Pillar wanted to "close the book" on the Roddenberry era and go with series that are their own creations. What's your reaction to that?

Berman: I find it humorous.

Three years ago Brandon Tartikoff called me into his office and asked me to develop a new series, which turned out to be *Deep Space Nine*. The reason he asked me to develop the series, when we were at the end of the fourth year of *The Next Generation*, was that the studio planned to stop producing *The Next Generation* at the end of seven years, and they wanted a show that would start in the middle of the sixth year, with a year and a half overlap, and then the new show would continue.

Their reasons for this were all very businesslike and financial—partly because they wanted to produce a *Next Generation* movie and felt they couldn't ask people to pay to see a movie when they could see the same cast on television in new episodes. It was also due to the way that costs escalate after a series has been in production for that number of years, as the producers and the cast start making huge sums of money. It also is a matter of the financial formulas Paramount had used in selling the show, and their desire to renew those formulas—there were a lot of different reasons,

based primarily on Paramount's business practices. I was never consulted on how long the show would run.

The cancellation may have come as a shock to some fans. But in interviews I did two and a half years ago, when *Deep Space Nine* was introduced, I made it very clear to people that the show was going to overlap for a year and a half with *The Next Generation*, and then *The Next Generation* was going to go away. This is not something new.

SFE: There's been quite a bit of crossover between series in the last couple of years, with characters from the original series and the two current series, as well as the planting of concepts that turn up in both shows. Will we see much more of that in the next year or so?

Berman: Actually, you'll see much less crossover. The nature of *Star Trek: Voyager* will make it very difficult for crossovers to occur, and the movies will be coming out every 18 to 24 months—we have no idea at this point if there will be any crossovers.

SFE: The series has flirted with the possible outbreak of interstellar war almost since the very beginning of the original series. But it's always pulled back from the brink. Does the idea of an actual outbreak of war have any attraction for you?

Berman: Not to me; I don't think *Star Trek* is about interstellar war. *Star Trek* has always had a lot of bad guys, it's always had adversaries, whether it's Romulans or Klingons or Cardassians...there's always been a sense of jeopardy stemming from interspecies' struggles and tensions. But interstellar wars are the things of other types of science fiction rather than *Star Trek*.

SFE: The *Deep Space Nine* cliffhanger acquaints us with a very mysterious interstellar force called the Dominion. Can we expect the mystery to be cleared up any time soon?

Berman: Quite early in the third season of *Deep Space Nine*, we are going to learn a great deal more about the Dominion. But the Dominion is going to remain somewhat of a mystery to us.

SFE: Paramount's security, this time, has not been as effective as in the past, particularly among those fans with access to comput-

ers and the Internet. Does this sort of thing concern you personally?

Berman: It's always a concern. It always upsets me when I see things that have been purloined...it's illegal, people are stealing things. It's just not right for people to steal things.

They're not necessarily doing it for the most heinous reasons, but when I hear there's a pile of scripts for sale at a convention, it nauseates me. Not because I'm all that concerned that a few thousand people are going to learn the plot of a movie, but it's just sickening that people are stealing these things, that there are people within the organization who can manage to sneak these things out, and that somebody else is going to copy and sell them. I think it's disgraceful in a way. But these are not nuclear secrets; you can only let your dissatisfaction with this sort of thing go so far.

We let Paramount security know about it, and they try to deal with it in their ways—and they do have some new ways that they are planning to use to deal with it. They've given me the impression that they are not going to stand by and let it happen to the degree that they have in the past.

But even if a few thousand, or even 10 thousand people learn something about the plot of a film or a television show ahead of time, it really doesn't affect us all that much; our show, and hopefully this movie, will be seen by tens of millions of people, so there are rather small numbers that are affected by it.

SFE: How far are you from a casting announcement on *Voyager*?

Berman: I think pretty far...probably a month, and we start shooting in six weeks.

SFE: That means the cast will be announced by the time people read this.

Berman: At least I hope so...

SFE: Is it time for a woman starship captain?

Berman: We're not sure. We certainly are considering it. In the casting sessions for the series we are seeing both men and



Robert Rodriguez

women...we'll see. It certainly will be more a question of casting than it will be a question of any candidate's gender.

SFE: I know you have to get back to work, so one more question: Where is *Star Trek* in the year 2000?

Berman: The year 2000's only 5 years away...I'd like to think we'll be in the eighth season of *Deep Space Nine*, the sixth season of *Voyager*, and we'll probably be preparing the third or fourth of *The Next Generation* movies. I think it's going to be a while before someone starts considering another series....

I expect *Deep Space Nine* is going to grow by leaps and bounds in the coming year, because it will have a few months of being on its own, without *The Next Generation* and all that hoopla. I think *Voyager* is going to be terrific, judging just by how well the development process is going. And I think that we'll be turning out a movie every couple of years.

But, while I consider myself something of a futurist, there's a big difference between telling you what's going to be happening in the 24th century and what's going to be happening on your television set in five years. That's a bit harder. □

Shatner, Trek & Tek

For a practiced actor, director and writer of SF, William Shatner is surprisingly low-tech. "I'm terrified of computers," he admits, "and I do all my writing on a long yellow legal notepad." He currently has the seventh *Tek* novel outlined, and is polishing the final draft of the sixth. Asked how he maintains such a high output, particularly in the face of his multiple commitments in television and film, Shatner points to the assistance of veteran SF novelist Ron Goulart. "He's right there helping me to a large extent," says Shatner. "I do the writing myself, he looks it over, rewrites it, and then I rewrite him."

"I have this fantasy that *TekWar* and its sequels *TekLords*, *TekLab*, *TekSecret*, etcetera, will spawn a media-merchandising-cult empire like the one created by *Star Trek*," Shatner freely admits. "I have this fantasy that the television series *Tek Wars*, which deals with 50 years in the

future, will continue running on television so that it will still be on TV 50 years in the future, when the series takes place." But Shatner doesn't kid himself that fulfilling that fantasy will be easy.

Complicating Shatner's relationship to *Trek* is the unique relationship between Shatner and the legions of *Star Trek* fans. Like Nimoy, Shatner has resisted countless lucrative offers to attend SF conventions and *Trek* gatherings.

However he has had some poignant moments with fans. Once, while riding in a cab, the driver told him he was a big fan of the original series. "I thought, 'Oh, great! Stuck with a Trekkie and no escape,'" Shatner recalls. "But then the guy told me he had been a POW in North Vietnam, locked up in a tiger cage. He told me that he and the other prisoners kept their sanity by reenacting episodes from *Star Trek*, with each prisoner playing a role.

"The cabbie said, 'I just wanted to thank you for saving my life.'"

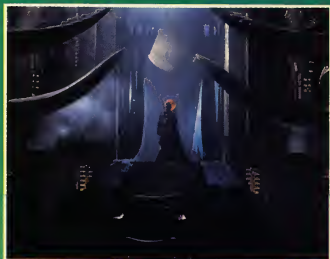
Shatner recalls another occasion when, jogging in Baltimore, he was caught in a sudden rainstorm and instantly drenched, with no shelter at hand. The weather was sufficiently severe that he was reduced to knocking on the windows of passing cars, but none would give him a ride.

"I was down to begging," Shatner says, acting the role of a Hollywood icon reduced to mortality by God's whim, holding his clothes about him and leaning into an imaginary car window to plead: "Haven't you ever seen *Star Trek*?"

Shatner declares the five-year mission that stretched to more than a quarter-century a good ride. "Because of *Star Trek*," he says, "I've had a life-changing, joyous experience, the likes of which only a handful of people have had. Nothing could have happened to me as a result of *Star Trek* that would mitigate the joy that I've had."

Frank Sanello & Ed Flixborn

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The Cover: Jean-Claude Van Damme is the Timecop.

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The Future Vision of Moebius

BY JEAN MARC LOFFICIER



JEAN GIRAUD, A K A MOEBIUS, IS AN ARTIST WHOSE WORK HAS been widely acknowledged as being one of the major, modern day influences in the field of visual arts. To quote the influential magazine *Print*: "After Hergé no other comics artist has exerted as powerful an influence on comics as Moebius."

Born in 1938 in Fontenay-sous-Bois, near Paris, France, Giraud displayed a love of illustration at an early age. In 1954, while still a student at the Paris School of Applied Arts, he wrote and drew his first Western strip, thereby launching a career as a prominent Western illustrator.

In 1963, Giraud met scriptwriter Jean-Michel Charlier and, together, the two men created the character of *Lieutenant Blueberry*

The 1992 animated feature, *Nemo* was based on Windsor McCay's newspaper strip "Little Nemo in Slumberland." Moebius completed a variety of designs for the production company Tokyo Movie Shinsha, including this poster. LEFT: One of Moebius' first film assignments was to design costumes and vehicles for Walt Disney's 1982 "computer-land" tale, *Tron*.

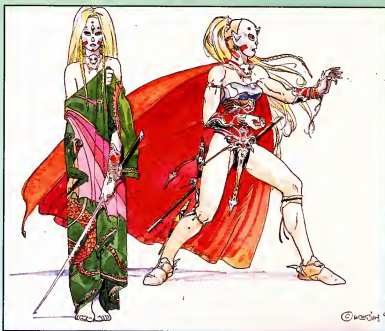




for the weekly magazine *Pilote*. Eventually, this became one of the most celebrated Western epics in the world. It was at that time that Giraud created the signature of "Moebius," which he used to sign dark-humored comic strips in the satirical magazine *Hara-Kiri*.

In 1974, Giraud co-founded the ground-breaking magazine *Metal Hurlant* which almost single-handedly transformed comics into an adult medium. For it, he created a number of seminal, breakthrough science fiction and fantasy stories, such as *Arzach* (1974), *The Airfight Garage* (1977-1980) and *The Incal* (1980-1988), a SF trilogy written by cult filmmaker Alexandro Jodorowsky, with whom he worked on an aborted film version of Frank Herbert's SF classic, *Dune*. His influence eventually spread to America with the creation of the magazine *Heavy Metal*, published by National Lampoon in 1977.

This exposure brought Moebius'





work to the attention of filmmakers such as Ridley Scott, George Lucas, James Cameron and Luc Besson. Giraud's credits as visual conceptualist include design work on *Alien* (1979), *Tron* (1982), *Masters of the Universe* (1986), *Willow* (1987) and *The Abyss* (1988), as well as concepts for Euro-Disneyland. In the words of George Lucas: "What strikes me the most of all about Moebius' work is its sheer beauty."

In 1980, Giraud designed and co-directed with Rene Laloux *The Time Masters*, a French animated feature made in Hungary. In 1984, he worked on *Nemo*, a full-length animated adaptation of Winsor McCay's celebrated comic strip, finally released last year.

In 1987, Marvel Comics began the publication of a series of graphic novels meant to be the first complete American collection of Giraud's comics work. With 30 volumes to date, and more scheduled, these books have

broken sales records in their category and are widely considered the most successful American publication of European comics material ever. The industry magazine *The Comics Journal* has called the Moebius graphic novels "the standard against which any other European comics translation must be measured," and *Newsweek* has noted their "pure visual delight... unfolding with the logic of M.C. Escher."

Giraud is also recognized as one of Europe's finest artists. His originals have been exhibited in France, Italy, Spain, Mexico, Austria, and the United States. In 1982, he was consecrated "Best Artist in Graphic Arts," by the French minister of culture and, in 1984, was decorated "Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres," (France's highest decoration for cultural and artistic achievements) by French President François Mitterrand. A stamp bearing one of his designs was issued by the French government in January 1988. In an article published in *Playboy* in 1991, SF writer Harlan Ellison dubbed Moebius "a

(French) national treasure."

Moebius images have been used by major advertisers, such as Citroen, Greenpeace, Maxell, Maxwell House Coffee, and Perrier, and have graced the covers of albums, books and magazines: Jimi Hendrix, Guy Beart, Harlan Ellison, Robert Silverberg, Kurt Vonnegut, *Glamour*, *L'Express*, and *Le Monde*.

In addition to continuing the creation of new comics stories, Moebius has worked on *Starwatcher*, a French computer animated feature based on one of his characters. Unfortunately, the project was canceled due to the death of its producer. Moebius has now embarked on the direction of his classic graphic novel *The Airtight Garage* as a full-length animated feature. □

ABOVE: James Cameron's 1989 sci-fi saga, *The Abyss*, featured "benevolent" underwater aliens largely designed by Moebius. TOP LEFT: *Starwatcher* was to be a computer animated feature based on Moebius characters. A 10-minute short was created but the full-length film was aborted with the untimely death of the film's producer. FAR LEFT: Moebius created costume designs for George Lucas' 1988 fantasy film, *Willow*. These designs for "Sorsha" were not used, but Val Kilmer's character, "Madmartigan," featured a pure Moebius costume.

Peter Cushing: The Baron

BY STEPHEN JONES

*Twenty years of struggle preceded his "overnight success."
"It was the scene with the rats that did it," he says.*



This October, as part of a month-long celebration of the classic actors of horror film, the Sci-Fi Channel will dedicate a week to the films of Peter Cushing, who has assayed the role of Baron Victor Frankenstein in more feature films than any other actor.

When Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* was first published anonymously in 1818, it quickly made its way to the British stage, with at least nine unauthorized productions staged during the author's lifetime. But it was in America that the Creature came to life on film, first in a silent version made by the Edison Studios at the turn of the century, and later with the Universal Frankenstein cycle (to be highlighted in its own special Sci-Fi Channel week starting November 4).

In 1957, Hammer Studios, with Cushing's help, reclaimed the story of the mad doctor and his soulless creation for Britain, a claim to be reaffirmed when Kenneth Branagh's adaptation of Shelley's novel reaches the screen this November. An apt time, therefore, to pay tribute to the man who, more than any other, has lent this creator of inhuman monsters a human face.

In 1957, *The Curse of Frankenstein*, (French release poster, left) sparked a horror boom exploited by Hammer, AIP and others throughout the 1960s. Hammer's last entry in the series, 1974's *Frankenstein and the Monster from Hell* (pictured at left and right), made deliberate references to the experimental medicine of transplant pioneer Dr. Christian Barnard.



I WAS 40 YEARS OLD AND A failure as an actor when the opportunity to play Baron Frankenstein was offered to me," Peter Cushing revealed. Born in Surrey, England, on May 26, 1913, Cushing had always wanted to be an actor since his early days at school. After working as a surveyor's assistant in his father's office for three years, he finally got a job for 15 shillings a week with a repertory company in Worthing. Once he had saved £50, he bought a one-way ticket to Hollywood.

He found work playing Louis Hayward's stand-in in James Whale's *The Man in the Iron Mask* (1939) and went on to appear in the Laurel and Hardy comedy *Chumps at Oxford* (1939), *Vigil in the Night* (1940) and Whale's *They Dare Not Love* (1940), amongst other films. With the outbreak of war, he worked his way home to Britain, in 1941 helping to entertain the troops with the Entertainments National Service Association (ENSA), where he met and married Helen Beck.

A number of small film and television parts followed, including Osric in Laurence Olivier's 1947 adaptation of *Hamlet* (although he didn't share any scenes with another young featured actor named Christopher Lee). Then, in 1956, he gave an award-winning performance as Winston Smith in Rudolph Cartier's live television adaptation of George Orwell's 1984 for the BBC.

"It was 1954 which got me labeled 'The Horror Man,'" recalled Cushing. "It was the scene with the rats that did it; nothing like that had been seen on TV before."

It was the actor's performance in that production which also attracted the attention of Hammer Films' Michael Carreras. Meanwhile, when Cushing heard that Hammer was considering a remake of *Frankenstein*, he asked his agent to contact the film company. "I'd seen the original many years ago with Boris Karloff and Colin Clive and had thought it was a wonderful film and a wonderful part," he explained.

"That's how it all happened. I had no idea what I was beginning, though I soon found

out that everything Christopher Lee and I did afterwards was described as a 'horror' film, even the *Sherlock Holmes* film I did."

The Curse of Frankenstein (1957) was a huge box office success around the world and forever typecast Cushing and his co-star Lee as horror stars. However, the actor didn't mind being typed if it meant steady work, as he later revealed: "Despite years of endeavor both in America and in British television, I could see no future and was about to give up acting to design scarves for a living. My dear wife, Helen, was even reduced to taking in laundry."

Numerous films for Hammer and other studios followed. He went on to recreate his role as Baron Frankenstein in *The Revenge of Frankenstein* (1958), *The Evil of Frankenstein* (1964), *Frankenstein Created Woman* (1966), *Frankenstein Must Be Destroyed* (1969) and *Frankenstein and the Monster from Hell* (1973), as well as making a brief cameo appearance as the character in the comedy *One More Time* (1970).

"Frankenstein has tremendous style," explained the actor, "because he is always the same character. The writers do try and get some variety into the films, and you also try to create your character from what the scriptwriter has given you. And as he's always being frustrated, because there are always those beastly villagers knocking on his door, he perhaps becomes more ruthless in the way he goes about getting his materials."

"*Frankenstein* is about a man who has done the impossible in creating another man. He was really trying to prove something. For that reason I have never thought of him as being an essentially evil character, but one so single-minded and obsessed by what he is

trying to achieve that any means will justify the end. He is indeed trying to be God, and in a sense, better than God."

Cushing's dedication to the role meant that whenever he was required to perform surgery on screen, he consulted his local doctor about which techniques he should use. "He spent about an hour explaining how to transplant a brain," said the actor. "I also believe that when you are involved with these pictures which are dealing with the impossible, you have to believe in them and love them yourself if you are going to get an audience to believe in them with you. But I don't think that Peter Cushing is all that much like Frankenstein."

Since the mid-1980s, the actor has remained semi-retired from the screen. However, he will always be indelibly linked in the minds of modern audiences with the role of Victor Frankenstein.

"At Hammer, our films had a certain style, a certain charm," Peter Cushing observed, "even though they set out to shock. Really, they weren't so much horror films as fantasies. Too many of today's so-called horror films are crude in the extreme. They are not the sort of films I would want to be in."

"The strange thing is that when we first started these films back in 1957, everything that Frankenstein got up to was pretty impossible. But now Dr. Barnard has caught up. He hasn't gone quite as far as me, because I have transplanted brains—not very successfully, I admit—but we all have to start somewhere. Then, transplants began to be shown on television and we thought that would be the end of the Baron, with his crude, do-it-yourself surgery. But he is more popular than ever." □

Robert Heinlein's *Puppet Masters*, the classic '50s story of alien invasion and mind control, finally arrives on the silver screen. Heinlein's story was actually published before the now-classic *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, which it resembles in its paranoia.





Art photo: Michael Rasmussen

Robert Heinlein's The Puppet Masters

BUCKLED CONCRETE, TORN METAL, AN ENTIRE underground parking structure disrupted by an alien presence ripping through the various levels, to establish its own underground home base; any Los Angeleno who survived January's 7.0 earthquake would recognize the striking similarities between this set, filling the inside of the Warner Brothers Hollywood sound stages, to the widespread devastation caused by the quake. In fact, these sets designed for Robert Heinlein's *The Puppet Masters* were constructed once before in the Santa Clarita Valley. "The building nearly collapsed because the building itself was right on the fault line, so we had to rebuild here. It was a matter of economics," notes



LEFT: Donald Sutherland, Eric Thal and Julie Warner are government agents sent to Iowa to investigate UFO sightings. RIGHT: Eric Thal and Julie Warner discover a young boy captured in an alien cocoon. RIGHT BELOW: An alien attaches itself to the spinal column of Richard Belzer, penetrating the brain and nervous system of its human host.

director Stuart Orme. The idea in the story, which isn't pure Heinlein, is that once the ship arrived, it started to grow and it needed a place where it wouldn't be detected. So it grew in this space through an underground culvert and filled up three floors of a parking structure, which it sort of etched out until it created a big enough space to allow people to come back to merge with the central brain."

Although it's taken nearly 40 years for the Robert Heinlein novel of brain-merging on a grand scale to arrive on the big screen, Orme and his crew have gone to painstaking efforts to ensure this \$20-million film is as faithful as any adaptation can be. "I'm making a movie, not writing a book," Orme points out. "The book was written in 1951 and is now set in 1994. I don't believe that Robert Heinlein would have written it the same way today. It's the duty of the filmmaker to make an adaptation as authentic as possible, even when he may be considered by some readers of the book to be taking license."

Producer Ralph Winter, with previous hands-on production experience in *Star Trek IV* through *VI*, agrees that the extraordinary elements in the novel wouldn't necessarily work the same way with contemporary audiences. "We had to bring into it believable situations that could happen today," says Winter. "Could an alien land today? Could this kind of thing be covered up? Could it really happen and gain a foothold and take over the Earth? And with that hypothesis in mind, we figured out a way to make this believable for today. Heinlein also set the novel in 2007, with flying cars and such. For budgetary and creative reasons, no one really wanted to set it in the future. We decided to set it in 1994, which presented its own set of challenges."

The *Puppet Masters* has been a pet project of executive producer Dr. Michael Engelberg, who has been trying to launch a feature film version of the book for several years. Ultimately, the project found a home at Disney's Hollywood Pictures. Early scripts took a Disneyish, "light thrills" approach, but upon the

arrival of Orme and Winter, the material began to take shape as a real chiller.

"The original script I read was definitely a bit closer to the feel of *Arachnophobia* than it ended up turning out," says Orme. "It had a sort of lightness of touch, which I wasn't entirely interested in, nor was the head of the studio at the time. He wanted something that was realistic and could happen on any street corner. And that's the way I wanted to do it."

WINTER'S EXPERIENCE IN THE GENRE was a major help to the production, since he was able to bring on a new group of writers to flesh out the important elements and bring the whole concept up-to-date. The final screenplay credit is shared by David Goyer, Terry Rossio and Ted Elliot. "Still, the novel was locked in that '50s political and social mentality, and we attempted to update that to the '90s."

The *Puppet Masters*, published in 1951, inspired others to pick up on its theme of aliens inhabiting human bodies, most notably Jack Finney's 1955 novel *Body Snatchers* (later retitled *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, to tie-in with the film's release), and various original screenplays, from *I Married a Monster From Outer Space* to *Strange Invaders*. Although Heinlein was the first to explore this territory, the filmmakers behind the screen adaptation are quite aware that they may be accused of copying the very works that Heinlein originally inspired. "Those movies came out after the book was written and this movie is coming out after those movies. So it's not going to be totally derivative though people may feel like we just copied *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* or *Alien*. That's not the case. We didn't use those as source material, we used the book. To Dr. Engelberg's credit, he always kept urging us to go back to the book by saying, 'that's how Heinlein solved the problem, let's do it the way it was in the book.'"

The story concerns Andrew Nivens (Donald Sutherland), the head of the Office of Scientific Intelligence. When a UFO panic in Des

Moines, Iowa catches his attention, he goes to investigate the phenomena, accompanied by a NASA scientist (Julie Warner). On his arrival, he learns that the media has changed its mind about the sightings.

Eventually, Nivens learns that aliens have started to take over the town. By attaching themselves to the backs of their hosts, the *Puppet Masters* meld with their victim's central nervous systems, becoming one with them. When Nivens' son Sam (Eric Thal) becomes a victim, the movie becomes a struggle for Sam's soul—a struggle that if lost, could mean doom for all of Earth.

"I like the idea that Heinlein created, that the people who are taken over remain conscious of their original identity," says Orme. "Some people can't quite handle it and others become dependent. I think that's what makes it different from any of the other 'replacement' stories. We really tried to focus on the principal characters, and go into their psyches to see how it affects them psychologically and how the relationship between Nivens and his son is changed by the addition of this creature."

There are some obvious similarities between the role of Nivens, played by Donald Sutherland, and the actor's role in the 1978 *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, but that was not a consideration in the casting of the film. "He's just an extraordinary actor—it's not because he was in that movie," Orme says. "He just has that sort of real distinguished look now and he really can play somebody that has the dignity to be a right-hand man in the government."

In addition to the present-day setting, a few other liberties were taken with the material to make it more cinematically viable. "At one point in the book everyone is walking around naked, and that just wouldn't fly—it's easy to do in a book but not in a movie," he says. "I believe the book took place in summertime, so the only way to tell who had a slug on their back was to have them take off their clothes. We solved that in the movie by just taking shirts off. We also set the story in the springtime and fall, so it wouldn't be as convenient for everybody to be taking off their shirts all the time."

One of the more interesting challenges, Winter points out, was bringing life to the alien creatures, especially within their moderate budget. Early on, the studio commissioned designs from various effects houses and two-time Academy Award winner Greg Cannom, who has since gone on to the *Earth II* televi-



sion series, came up with the chosen creation.

"We had a limited budget and not the budget of a lot of science fiction films, so we were trying to come up with a creature that was interesting, different and that we hadn't seen before but which also filled the needs of the story," says Winter. The problem of course with any alien movie when the alien isn't very big is, how can you make it scary enough?" Orme says. The answer from Cannom and his crew was a series of very detailed mechanical creatures that, working together, brought the space suckers to life.

"How the creature works is that it flies out and its tentacles grab hold and paralyze the

host, and then it sucks into their spinal column, fusing their brain with the victim's," says Orme. "It's a scary thought, being invaded rather than being replaced. I love that notion of an invasion of the individual, and then an invasion of the entire race."

One annoying detail that has plagued the production from the start is the title. As of press time, *Robert Heinlein's The Puppet Masters* is the planned release title, though the Charles Band low-budget *Puppet Master* movies have soiled the name to some degree.

"I think the title will make Robert Heinlein fans happy, but I am annoyed that there is already a series of films that have used it and

that could impact our business" says Winter. What I'm really afraid of is that people who are aware of those *Puppet Master* killer-doll movies will avoid coming to this movie because they think it's simply a big-screen version of what they can see on video."

Various titles have been thrown around in recent months, but Orme feels nothing has quite done the material justice. "I would much rather see a more appropriate title with the tagline 'based on Robert Heinlein's *The Puppet Masters*,' but of course the marketing people say it's much more important to go the other way. The theory is that if you make something from a classic science fiction book, then almost irrespectively the fans will turn out—and obviously I hope they do. We think it's a reasonable portrayal of the original book and, if it were not for other films called the same thing, I don't think there would be much of a debate on it."

Regardless of what the Disney marketing team comes up with by the time the film is released in October, Winter is enthused by the interest already circulating among sci-fi aficionados regarding the big-screen adaptation. "I think we've got a pure science-fiction film and I don't see too many of those being made," says Winter. "I know we feel very good about delivering something very close to the book. It will be interesting to see if general audiences respond, as well as the science fiction fans. Besides, I think the science fiction world is pretty interesting; it's fun to look at a different world and see the implications it has for our own." □

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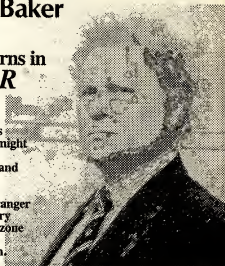
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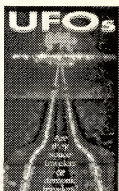
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Abel Ferrara's *Body Snatchers* merits a second look.

BY BOB STEVENS

ABEL FERRARA MADE HIS FIRST MARK as a moviemaker by puncturing winos with a power tool in *Driller Killer*, built his rep by transforming a rape victim into a sexually obsessed avenger in *Ms. 45*, and solidified his career by shaking up television with unforgettable displays of sadism in episodes of *Miami Vice* and *Crime Story*. ■ More recently, Ferrara brought his idiosyncratic despair and delirium to the

science fiction film *Body Snatchers* (Warner Home Video). This wild adaptation of Jack Finney's science fiction novel of the same name, following earlier versions by Don Siegel (1956) and Philip Kaufman (1978), (both of which expanded Finney's title to *Invasion of the Body*

a network of bare intelligence that rigidly controls each of its parts.

By the late '70s, when Kaufman's remake was released, society had moved a long way from the guilelessness of mid-century America; and with more worldly, corrupted people being snatched, it becomes hard for the audience to feel a sense of loss.

The same problem arises in Ferrara's movie: Inproductive or bad people actually have their lives improved, or made less demanding, by becoming somnambulant aliens. It makes a poor contrast to the viewer's memory of Dana Wynter being taken over in the 1956 movie, an experience much like watching a lovely butterfly turn into a brittle cockroach.

Paralleling the aforementioned social decay, the vampiric pods became increasingly repulsive with each successive film. They're disgustingly viscid and, in an interesting evolution, have assumed sexual characteristics. In Ferrara's film, for example, slithery tendrils of a pod emerge from the suds in a bathtub to sensually caress a young woman's sleeping form.

The current depiction of pods may be unnerving but a rich ambiguity has been lost: In the Siegel original, the reproduced, sexless, vegetable bodies seemed angelic, sheathed in their foamy rinds. In spite of the terrible consequences, this botanical idealization lent a sense of seductive allure to the loss of a person's soul.

Still, Ferrara's film has its own peculiar strengths. Set on an Army base in the Deep South, the drama reverberates with sci-fi echoes of institutionally imposed conformity and the inflexible order of mass discipline. The director makes it clear that the pod people are not extraordinary or strange in this context. They're just like bureaucrats—or soldiers. It's nearly impossible to sort the aliens out from the drunken, indifferent, authoritarian personalities of the camp. And that's scary.

The cast is led by Gabrielle Anwar as a teenager who realizes that something's threatening her family. Meg Tilly plays her childish stepmother. (In the loss of Tilly's humanity, there is no "before and after.") Reilly Murphy is Anwar's little brother. And Billy Wirth, one of 1987's *Lost Boys*, is a helicopter pilot who becomes involved with Anwar.

House of Horrors (1946, MCA-Universal Home Video) is about a creator of abstract sculptures who's tormented—and impoverished—by the criticism of a mean,



Abel Ferrara's *Body Snatchers*, the third version of Jack Finney's paranoid novel, takes place on an army base in the Deep South.

Snatchers), failed to find any sizeable audience upon its brief theatrical release last fall. Its tape and laser disc release allows the film a second opportunity to find its audience.

In Siegel's first adaptation, seed-pods from another planet drift down and settle unnoticed among the shade trees and porches of a classically bucolic California town. A growing band of involuntary "converts," men and women who've been reproduced and replaced by an incomprehensible process, carefully place the husks under bedroom windows and in abandoned cellars. After a night-long period of gestation, the pods split and reveal vegetable versions of defenseless, sleeping people.

Body-snatching—the disturbing loss of individuality and innocence, and often tagged as a metaphor for the "communist menace"—was a preoccupation of the early 1950s. The most frightening thing about such movies is watching a person you care about have his emotions stripped away as his identity is dissolved in a hive-mind,

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6. Terminator II-Endoskeleton plastic model by Halcyon (England) 1/9 scale. \$35
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Rondo Hatton as the Creeper attacks Virginia Grey in the sculptor's studio in *The House of Horrors*.

uncomprehending art critic. Driven to the verge of suicide by the journalist's foolish words, the sculptor encounters a man who's tried to drown himself in the river, a homicidal maniac known as the Creeper. The artist is struck by the primitive quality of the criminal's head and takes him home, intending to use the man as a subject for his work. The forsaken brute is deeply affected by the sculptor's friendship and concern.

Eventually, the Creeper murders a call girl out of sheer misogyny, dutifully slays two art critics at the suggestion of his benefactor, and then kills a young model in a case of mistaken identity.

The Creeper, another '40s spine-snapper, is noteworthy because he looks grotesque without the aid of makeup. The hulking figure that lurks in blind alleys and stalks midnight pedestrians is actor Rondo Hatton. He was a real-life victim of the terrible disease known as acromegaly. In this condition, a tumor of the pituitary gland typically causes gross deformation of the face and the progressive enlargement of hands and feet.

This kind of horror is a reversion to the cruel, voyeuristic entertainment of observing freaks in a carnival. Moviegoers found Hatton's physiognomy pitiable but mesmerizing, and they were made uneasy by his coarse, inarticulate voice. The use of Hatton as a circumstantial monster gives the term "exploitation film" a particularly somber, unhappy twist.

In *House*, the camera eye frequently roams among an array of clay forms, and their heavy concreteness is reflected in the Creeper's massive, fleshy head. In fact, there are so many images of a menacing substantiality and relentless bulk that the movie takes on the proportions of geological nightmare: The Creeper's face hangs over us like immense folds of rock.

Martin Kosleck, whose air of authoritative malice led to his being cast as a Nazi in a few pictures, is the sculptor. Virginia Grey plays a charming newspaper snoop. The somewhat dull Robert Lowery is a pinup artist who's a suspect in two of the murders. Dan Napier's vicious hauteur is convincing in his

portrayal of a rotten art critic. Maury Gertsman is the cinematographer whose urbane visuals provide a tantalizing mixture of glamour and shadows. And Jean Yarbrough, who also made *Devil Bat* and *She-Wolf of London*, is the director.

Captive Wild Woman (1943, MCA-Universal Home Video). When a mad scientist steals an intelligent gorilla named Cheela from a circus, he treats the creature with human hormones that were unethically extracted from one of his female patients. The serum and a brain transplant transform the large anthropoid into exotic Paula Dupree, a

woman-beast who conceals her savage emotions beneath a gorgeous human facade.

Whenever the gorilla-girl becomes jealous of another woman or feels sexually thwarted, the recessive Cheela angrily resurfaces. Paula/Cheela, a hybrid monster, kills her prey by severing the spinal cord with huge, sharp nails.

Though spine-snapping may sound laughable to contemporary horror fans, the fear of death by paralysis resonated throughout audiences in the 1940s, a time when the greatest public health scare was a polio epidemic. This shared anxiety left the door open for several back-breaking monsters in the years that followed.

An unnamed stuntman plays Cheela, but Paula is portrayed by Acquafetta, a unique star of melodramatic horror. Her round, dark eyes are set in an equally round, spacious face; her legs, with elegantly long calves, are perfect. Her shoulders are wide yet gently curved—a beauty of a beast. Acquafetta's lack of acting ability and stage fright obviously made her freeze up, but the barely suppressed panic and rigid gestures enhanced her eerie screen persona. She is like an animal that can only approximate human movements. Though Acquafetta has been variously identified as a Venezuelan or an American Indian, many devotees prefer to think of her as a member of an indecipherable race. Like other enigmatic figures of horror, she could be from anywhere.

Acquafetta is joined by John Carradine as the evil endocrinologist, Milburn Stone as a wild animal trainer, and Evelyn Ankers as an unintentional provocateur. The cinematographer is George Robinson, who shot many horror movies for Universal. The director is Edward Dmytryk, a film noir specialist who also made other memorable horror films, including *The Devil Commands*.

Until the End of the World (Warner Home Video). If it had been made by someone without the international reputation of filmmaker Wim Wenders, *Until the End of the World* might well have become a cult SF hit. But Wenders did make it and, coming as it

did on the heels of his critically acclaimed spiritual fantasy *Wings of Desire*, it was largely underrated by critics and ignored by SF fans. But, if you're at all interested in science fiction that relies more on ideas than on elaborate effects, it is well worth checking out.

As the orbit of a nuclear satellite decays, threatening a chain reaction among a network of similar devices circling the earth, Claire Tournier (Solveig Dommartin) fails to take part in the ensuing worldwide panic. Instead, she licks into a fortune in stolen money, which she subsequently squanders by traveling around the globe to chase a man (William Hurt) who repeatedly robs her and lies to her.

Halfway through this film's 158 minutes, as the end of the world arrives, the narrative settles geographically to a location deep in Australia's outback, where Claire has followed her deceiving lover to the laboratory of his father (Max Von Sydow), a half-mad scientist who has invented a camera capable of invading the human soul.

The film, as narrated by Claire's husband (Sam Neill), a novelist, plays very much like a novel, one combining the concrete sensuality of J.G. Ballard with the metaphysical preoccupations of Philip K. Dick (preoccupations all but absent in the well-known adaptations of Dick's work, *Total Recall* and *Blade Runner*).

The presence of William Hurt invites comparisons between *Until the End of the World* and *Altered States*, where Hurt also pursued soul in the name of science. *End of the World*, lacking the Christmas lights and elaborate effects of *Altered States*, is far more successful in taking the attentive viewer to the edge of the world of common experience—and on an emotionally rousing journey beyond it.

Ed Flixman

The Harvest (Columbia/Tri Star). It's rare to find a truly original thriller nowadays—one that takes the viewer into uncharted territory. But director David Marconi pulls it off in this mix of exotic characters, snappy dialogue and a deadly conceit involving an underground conspiracy.

Miguel Ferrer (usually typecast as a sarcastic supporting villain) stars as Charlie Pope, a hack scriptwriter who travels to South America to research a contract killing and gets more than he bargained for. On the positive side, he encounters a sexy American blonde (Leilani Sarelle), who immediately takes a liking to him. On the other hand, his writer's block is worse than ever, plus he wakes up one morning in a makeshift hospital bed, with a ragged scar across his back and one of his kidneys missing. The poor schmuck's an unwilling volunteer in the black market organ trade, and when they come back for his second kidney (hence the title), Charlie has to run for his life from the inhospitable local cops and a bevy of eccentric assassins, while doing his best to deter-

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Sci. Fi. Channel Mag.



Solweig Dommarin and William Hurt in *Until the End of the World*.

mine who in the cast isn't in on the scheme.

All this is captured with a vaguely surreal edge, including dream sequences, flashbacks, and a wicked sense of pitch black humor. Above all, what makes the film spark is Ferrer, who chews up the role and spits it out. He's not your typical movie hero by any means—the guy's a snotty, drunk Ugly American—but in comparison to the rest of the warped cast, he's practically a saint. Adding to the erotic tension, Sarelle smolders as the object of Charlie's passion. This is a film that isn't afraid to take chances, beginning with a B-movie premise, then creating its own set of brutal rules which always keep the viewer guessing. The result is a sharp, paranoid vision of a society in which humans have become saleable commodities and everyone has a price.

Wax, or *The Discovery of Television Among the Bees* (First Run Features). Every so often a movie comes out of nowhere and proves that imagination and perseverance will always win out over millions of dollars worth of brainless special effects. Here's a perfect example: Despite the lack of budget, stars or a major distributor, this feature from underground filmmaker David Blair is one of the most fascinating science fiction films in recent memory, a complex meditation on the nature of life, death and reality, not to mention a startling integration of cyberpunk aesthetics and experimental moviemaking.

Our narrator is Jacob Maker, who begins by giving the viewer a brief rundown of his unique family tree, including his grandfather, James "Hive" Maker, a photographer of the super-normal who believed he could capture the spirits of the dead on film. Jacob himself works for the U.S. Government on weapons simulators and spends hours standing amid his collection of bees, hearing voices from within the hives.

Without totally understanding how, Jacob suddenly begins experiencing different levels of reality, beginning with a trip back in time to the place of his birth, and the ability to sense living souls within the weapons systems at his job. Eventually his bees insert a mirrored crystal inside Jacob's head, allowing him to discover a new form of television. And through these continued communications, Jacob comes to the realization that the

Continued on page 73

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SEPTEMBER • OCTOBER PROGRAMMING SCHEDULE

DAYTIME

TIME	Monday - Friday	Saturday	Sunday
6:00	Cartoon Quest	Informational	Informational
6:30			
7:00		Cartoon Quest	
7:30			
8:00			Science Show
8:30			Inside Space
9:00	Lost in Space		Mysteries ¹¹
9:30			Sci-Fi Buzz
10:00	The Incredible Hulk		Ripley's Believe It or Not
10:30			
11:00	Dark Shadows	Swamp Thing	Sci-Fi Trader
11:30	Dark Shadows / Fri. Sci-Fi Trader	Swamp Thing	My Secret Identity
Noon	Beauty and the Beast	The Powers of Matthew Star	The Voyagers ¹²
12:30			
1:00	The Bionic Woman	Space 1999	Time Tunnel ¹³
1:30			
2:00	The Hitchhiker	Moonlight Matinee	UFO
2:30	Beyond Reality		
3:00	Land of the Giants		Moonlight Matinee
3:30			
4:00	Lost in Space	Radiation Theater	
4:30			
5:00	The Incredible Hulk		Radiation Theater
5:30			
6:00	Beauty and the Beast	Starman ⁸	
6:30			Sci-Fi Trader

EVENING

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
7:00	Ray Bradbury	Ray Bradbury	Ray Bradbury	Ray Bradbury	Ray Bradbury	Alien Nation ⁹	Amazing Stories
7:30	Hitchcock Pre.	Hitchcock Pre.	Hitchcock Pre.	Hitchcock Pre.	Hitchcock Pre.		Amazing Stories
8:00	Battlestar Gal. / ⁵	Battlestar Gal. /	Battlestar Gal. /	Battlestar Gal. /	Battlestar Gal. /	Sci-Fi Feature	The Incredible
8:30	Buck Rogers	Buck Rogers	Buck Rogers	Buck Rogers	Buck Rogers	Film	Hulk
9:00	SF Series/Movie ⁶	SF Series/Movie	SF Series/Movie	SF Series/Movie	SF Series/Movie		Sci-Fi Buzz
9:30							Mysteries ¹³
10:00	Quan.Leap/Movie ⁷	Quan.Leap/Movie	Quan.Leap/Movie	Quan.Leap/Movie	Quan.Leap/Movie	Friday the 13th	Inside Space ¹⁰
10:30						The Series ¹⁰	Science Show

LATE NIGHT

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
11:00	Ray Bradbury	Ray Bradbury	Ray Bradbury	Ray Bradbury	Ray Bradbury	Alien Nation ⁹	Amazing Stories
11:30	Hitchcock Pre.	Hitchcock Pre.	Hitchcock Pre.	Hitchcock Pre.	Hitchcock Pre.		Amazing Stories
Midnite	Battlestar Gal. or ⁵	Battlestar Gal. or	Battlestar Gal. or	Battlestar Gal. or	Battlestar Gal. or	Sci-Fi Feature	The Incredible
12:30	Buck Rogers	Buck Rogers	Buck Rogers	Buck Rogers	Buck Rogers	Film	Hulk
1:00	SF Series/Movie ⁶	SF Series/Movie	SF Series/Movie	SF Series/Movie	SF Series/Movie		Sci-Fi Buzz
1:30							Mysteries ¹³
2:00	Quan.Leap/Movie ⁷	Quan.Leap/Movie	Quan.Leap/Movie	Quan.Leap/Movie	Quan.Leap/Movie	Friday the 13th	Inside Space ¹⁰
2:30						The Series	Science Show
3:00	Informational	Informational	Informational	Informational	Suspense Theater	Radiation Theater	Sci-Fi Trader
3:30							

All programming shown Eastern Standard Time. Please adapt for your local time zone. Titles in red denote original programming. All programming subject to change. These shows begin the week of 9/26 as indicated by the small number:

1. Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea. 2. Voyagers/Time Tunnel. 3. Lost in Space. 4. Incredible Hulk. 5. Quantum Leap. 6. Sci-Fi Movie airs one week per month. 7. Program TBA. 8. Alien Nation. 9. Galactica 1980. 10. War of the Worlds. 11. UFO Diaries. 12. The Magician. 13. Land of the Giants.

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SEPTEMBER MOVIES ON THE SCI-FI CHANNEL

SATURDAY, 9/3

2:00 pm Journey to the Center of the Earth	1959, Science Fiction, James Mason
3:00 pm A Grey Matter	1985, Horror, Bruce Campbell
12:00 am The Evil Dead	1985, Horror, Bruce Campbell
3:00 am Phantom of the Opera	1925, Horror, Lon Chaney Sr.

SUNDAY, 9/4

9:00 am Tales From the Darkside	Science Fiction
3:00 pm Quintet (Un-Edited)	1979, Science Fiction, Paul Newman

SATURDAY, 9/10

2:00 pm Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy Pts. 1&2	1982, Science Fiction, Simon Jones
3:30 pm Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy Pts. 3&4	1982, Science Fiction, Simon Jones
5:00 pm Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy Pts. 5&6	1982, Science Fiction, Simon Jones
7:00 pm Critters	1986, Science Fiction, Dee Wallace Stone
9:00 pm Critters 3	1991, Horror, Aimee Brooks
11:00 pm Critters	1986, Science Fiction, Dee Wallace Stone
1:00 am Critters 3	

1991, Horror, Aimee Brooks	
3:00 am Siegfried	1924, Mythology, Silent, Paul Richter

SUNDAY, 9/11

3:00 pm Critters	1986, Science Fiction, Dee Wallace Stone
5:00 pm Critters 3	1991, Horror, Aimee Brooks

SATURDAY, 9/17

2:00 pm The Blue Monkey	1987, Science Fiction, Susan Anspach
4:00 pm Zeram	1991, Science Fiction, Yuko Moriyama
8:00 pm The Man Who Fell to Earth	Science Fiction, David Bowie
12:00 am The Man Who Fell to Earth	Science Fiction, David Bowie
3:00 am The Golem	1920, Horror, Paul Wegener

SUNDAY, 9/18

3:00 pm The Mephisto Waltz	1971, Horror, Alan Alda, Jacqueline Bisset
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MONDAY, 9/19

1:00 pm Conan the Destroyer	1984, Fantasy, A. Schwarzenegger
1:00 am Conan the Destroyer	1984, Fantasy, A. Schwarzenegger

TUESDAY, 9/20

9:00 pm Wizards	1977, Animated, Bob Holt (Voice)
1:00 am Wizards	1977, Animated, Bob Holt

WEDNESDAY, 9/21

9:00 pm Wizards of the Demon Sword	1974, Fantasy, Lyle Waggoner
1:00 am Wizards of the Demon Sword	1974, Fantasy, Lyle Waggoner

THURSDAY, 9/22

9:00 pm The Sword and the Sorcerer	1982, Fantasy, Lee Horsley
1:00 am The Sword and the Sorcerer	1982, Fantasy, Lee Horsley

FRIDAY, 9/23

9:00 pm The Princess Bride	1987, Fantasy, Cary Elwes
1:00 am The Princess Bride	1987, Fantasy, Cary Elwes

SATURDAY, 9/24

2:00 pm Horror Express	1972, Christopher Lee, Peter Cushing
4:00 pm Alligator	1980, Horror, Robert Forster
3:00 pm Alligator 2: The Mutation	1990, Horror, Joseph Bologna
12:00 am Alligator 2: The Mutation	1990, Horror, Joseph Bologna
3:00 pm Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde	1920, Horror, John Barrymore

SUNDAY, 9/25

3:00 pm The Alligator People	1959, Science Fiction, Lon Chaney, Jr.
4:30 pm Alligator 2: The Mutation	1990, Horror, Joseph Bologna

OCTOBER MOVIES ON THE SCI-FI CHANNEL

SATURDAY, 10/1

2:00 pm Let's Scare Jessica to Death	1971, Thriller, Zohra Lampert
4:00 pm Night of the Living Dead	1968, Horror, Judith O'Dea
8:00 pm Dollman	1991, Science Fiction, Tim Thomerson
12:00 am Dollman	1991, Science Fiction, Tim Thomerson
3:00 am Dracula's Daughter	1936, Horror, Gloria Holden

SUNDAY, 10/2

12:00 pm It Came from Beneath the Sea	1955, Science Fiction, Kenneth Tobey
2:00 pm Earth vs the Flying Saucers	1956, Science Fiction, Hugh Marlowe

4:00 pm Twenty Million Miles to Earth	1957, Science Fiction, William Hopper
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MONDAY, 10/3

9:00 pm Son of Dracula	1943, Horror, Lon Chaney, Jr.
1:00 am Son of Dracula	1943, Horror, Lon Chaney, Jr.

TUESDAY, 10/4

9:00 pm The Alligator People	1959, Lon Chaney, Jr.
1:00 am The Alligator People	1959, Lon Chaney, Jr.
3:00 am Fantastic Planet	1973, Animated Science Fiction

WEDNESDAY, 10/5

9:00 pm Man Made Monster	1944, Science Fiction, Lon Chaney, Jr., Lionel Atwill
1:00 am Man Made Monster	1944, Science Fiction, Lon Chaney, Jr., Lionel Atwill

THURSDAY, 10/6

9:00 pm The Wolf Man	1941, Horror, Lon Chaney, Jr.
1:00 am The Wolf Man	1941, Horror, Lon Chaney, Jr.

FRIDAY, 10/7

9:00 pm Frankenstein Meets the Wolf Man	1943, Horror, Lon Chaney, Jr.
1:00 am Frankenstein Meets the Wolf Man	1943, Horror, Lon Chaney, Jr.

SATURDAY, 10/8

2:00 pm George's Island	1991, Fantasy, Ian Bannen
4:00 pm The Other	1972, Horror, Uta Hagen
8:00 pm Horrorplanet	1982, Horror, Robin Clarke, Jennifer Ashley
12:00 am Horrorplanet	1982, Horror, Robin Clarke, Jennifer Ashley
3:00 am The Mad Ghoul	1943, Horror, David Bruce

SUNDAY, 10/9
 3:00 pm Slaughter of the Vampires
 1961, Horror, Walter Brandy
 4:30 pm Heart Stoppers:
 Horror at the Movies
 1992, Documentary

MONDAY, 10/10
 9:00 pm The Brides of Dracula
 1960, Horror, Peter Cushing
 1:00 am The Brides of Dracula
 1960, Horror, Peter Cushing

TUESDAY 10/11
 9:00 pm The Evil of Frankenstein
 1964, Horror, Peter Cushing
 1:00 am The Evil of Frankenstein
 1964, Horror, Peter Cushing

WEDNESDAY 10/12
 9:00 pm Dr. Terror's House of Horror
 1965, Horror, Peter Cushing, Donald Sutherland
 1:00 am Dr. Terror's House of Horror
 1965, Horror, Peter Cushing, Donald Sutherland

THURSDAY 10/13
 9:00 pm Horror Express
 1972, Horror, Christopher Lee, Peter Cushing
 1:00 am Horror Express
 1972, Horror, Christopher Lee, Peter Cushing

FRIDAY, 10/14
 9:00 pm The Skull
 1965, Horror, Christopher Lee, Peter Cushing
 1:00 am The Skull
 1965, Horror, Christopher Lee, Peter Cushing

SATURDAY, 10/15
 2:00 pm The Devonsville Terror
 1983, Horror, Donald Pleasence
 4:00 pm To Die For
 1989, Horror, Brendan Hughes

8:00 pm The Black Cat
 1990, Horror, Florence Guerin
 12:00 am The Black Cat
 1990, Horror, Florence Guerin
 3:00 am Night of the Living Dead
 1968, Horror, Judith O'Dea

SUNDAY, 10/16
 3:00 pm Blood and Roses
 1961, Horror, Mel Ferrer



Bela Lugosi and Boris Karloff star in the classic Poe tale, The Black Cat.

4:30 pm The Black Cat
 1990, Horror, Florence Guerin
MONDAY, 10/17
 9:00 pm The Mummy
 1932, Horror, Boris Karloff
 1:00 am The Mummy
 1932, Horror, Boris Karloff

TUESDAY 10/18
 9:00 pm The Raven
 1935, Boris Karloff, Bela Lugosi
 1:00 am The Raven
 1935, Boris Karloff, Bela Lugosi

WEDNESDAY 10/19
 9:00 pm The Haunted Strangler
 1958, Suspense, Boris Karloff
 1:00 am The Haunted Strangler
 1958, Suspense, Boris Karloff

THURSDAY 10/20
 9:00 pm Corridors of Blood
 1958, Horror, Boris Karloff
 1:00 am Corridors of Blood
 1958, Horror, Boris Karloff

FRIDAY, 10/21
 9:00 pm Black Friday
 1940, Horror, Boris Karloff, Bela Lugosi
 1:00 am Black Friday
 1940, Horror, Boris Karloff, Bela Lugosi

SATURDAY, 10/22
 2:00 pm The Hideous Sun Demon
 1959, Horror, Robert Clark
 3:30 pm The Night that Panicked America
 1975, Science Fiction, Vic Morrow

8:00 pm The Sender
 1982, Kathryn Harrold
 12:00 am The Sender
 1982, Kathryn Harrold
 3:00 am Supernatural
 1933, Horror, Carole Lombard

SUNDAY, 10/23
 3:00 pm Sweet Scent of Death

4:30 pm The Sender
 1982, Horror, Kathryn Harrold
MONDAY, 10/24
 9:00 pm The Black Cat
 1934, Horror, Boris Karloff, Bela Lugosi
 1:00 am The Black Cat
 1934, Horror, Boris Karloff, Bela Lugosi

TUESDAY 10/25
 9:00 pm White Zombie
 1932, Bela Lugosi
 1:00 am White Zombie
 1932, Horror, Bela Lugosi
WEDNESDAY 10/26
 9:00 pm Murders in the Rue Morgue
 1932, Horror, Bela Lugosi
 1:00 am Murders in the Rue Morgue
 1932, Horror, Bela Lugosi

THURSDAY 10/27
 9:00 pm Dark Eyes of London
 1940, Suspense, Bela Lugosi
 1:00 am Dark Eyes of London
 1940, Suspense, Bela Lugosi

FRIDAY, 10/28
 9:00 pm Dracula
 1931, Horror, Bela Lugosi
 1:00 am Dracula
 1931, Horror, Bela Lugosi

SATURDAY, 10/29
 2:00 pm Phantasm
 1979, Horror, Michael Baldwin
 4:00 pm The Evil Dead
 1985, Horror, Bruce Campbell
 8:00 pm Heartstoppers:
 Horror at the Movies
 Documentary

12:00 am Heartstoppers:
 Horror at the Movies
 Documentary
 3:00 am White Zombie
 (Colorized Version)
 1933, Horror, Bela Lugosi

SUNDAY, 10/30
 12:00 pm Puppet Master
 Horror
 2:00 pm Puppet Master 2
 1990, Horror, Elizabeth MacLellan

4:00 pm Puppet Master 3:
 Toulon's Revenge
 1991, Horror, Guy Rolfe
MONDAY, 10/31
 9:00 pm Frankenstein
 1931, Horror, Boris Karloff, Colin Clive
 1:00 am Frankenstein
 1931, Horror, Boris Karloff, Colin Clive

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FTL Newsfeed airs Monday through Friday at 2:58 pm, 7:29 pm and 11:29 pm; Saturday at 3:59 pm, 5:59 pm; Sunday at 11:50 am, 12:59 pm 4:59 pm.

A quartet of books on *Star Trek's* creator, depict him as a saint... and as a monster.

BY LAWRENCE TUCKER

GENE RODDENBERRY will be dead just three years this October 23, and already there are at least four full-length books about him, including a worshipful guide to the Roddenberry Philosophy, published by a major university press, that hails him as an "American genius"; an all-out, no-holds-barred attack on the Roddenberry

"myth" that bubbles over with venom and bile; and a painstakingly detailed "authorized biography" more than 600 pages long. Not bad for a TV writer whose single claim to fame, *Star Trek*, was dismissed by *Variety* the first week it aired as "an incredible and dreary mess of confusion and complexities."

Confusion and complexities abound when one

Angeles police force, his years of struggle as a TV writer—in a mere dozen pages, yet later devotes eight pages to a heavy-breathing *Tarzan* movie project that understandably failed to find a backer.

Van Hise's stance is a generally uncritical one—he tends to take Roddenberry at his word—and he sometimes gets his facts wrong; he has Roddenberry serving as "a fighter pilot at the helm of a B-17" (the B, of course, is for bomber), carrying on as "one of eight survivors" of the Syrian air crash (there were 22), and dying of a heart attack "in his West Los Angeles home." (He died while visiting his doctor.)

Still, the quotes Van Hise has assembled are well-chosen—Roddenberry, in his prime, had provocative and irreverent opinions on almost any subject—and though it lacks an index, the book finds room for plenty of amusing anecdotes: on the problems Roddenberry had with network censors (in one of his early crime scripts, a character couldn't employ a fire iron as a weapon because it implied "the failure of an advertised product—tires"); the difficulty in photographing a green-skinned alien woman for the original *Star Trek* pilot ("No matter how dark they made the green, their model always looked perfectly normal. Eventually they discovered that someone at the photo lab... was color-correcting what he thought was a flaw in the photography"); NBC's request, to please advertisers, that the crew of the *Enterprise* include a few smokers ("I said, 'Listen, in that time they're not going to smoke.' And they said, 'Oh, you can use some square science-fiction cigarettes'"); Leonard Nimoy's early obscurity (he was identified in a 1966 Hollywood Christmas parade as "Leonard Nimby"); and Patrick Stewart's prickly personality ("A former staffer reported that Stewart walks off the set in a snit at least once a week. His co-workers have unflatteringly nicknamed him 'Baldilocks'").

If Van Hise's approach is fannish—"The trials of the past behind him, he steered his *Trek* universe to new glories.... He beat the odds again, achieving the allegedly impossible. He proved you can't keep a good man down"—that of Yvonne Fern in *Gene Roddenberry: The Last Conversation* (228 pp, \$20; Berkeley: University of California Press) is reverent to the point of hagiography. A former nun turned devout Trekkie, she encountered the wheelchair-bound Roddenberry during the final months of his life and immediately decided that the two



Gene Roddenberry on the set of *Star Trek: The Next Generation* with Jonathan Frakes.

attempts to form an image of the man based on the often conflicting testimonies of these four books. As reviewers will doubtless point out (the comparison is irresistible), what we have here is a *Rashomon* for the TV generation.

To James Van Hise, whose *The Man Who Created Star Trek: Gene Roddenberry* (156 pp, \$14.95; Las Vegas: Pioneer) was the first out of the chute after Roddenberry's death, he was "a dreamer, a visionary" who "fought to bring quality and intelligence to television." Aimed squarely at the fans, Van Hise's book is a classic cut-and-paste job that relies heavily on quotes from previously published Roddenberry interviews and speeches but fails to reveal the sources of these quotes, though it appends, at the end, a three-page bibliography.

Its focus is, to say the least, unbalanced; it rushes through the first 45 years of Roddenberry's life—the dangers he faced piloting a B-17 over the Pacific in World War II, the years as a pilot for Pan Am (including a near-fatal crash in the Syrian desert), his career on the Los

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AHH! SEPTEMBER ARRIVES; the summer wanes, the extremes of August and July turn tame and temperate... within weeks, the trees' leafy cloaks will turn a riot of colors, before fading and falling, and yielding themselves in service to the loam of distant spring....

Ah, who am I kidding? (OK, "whom.")

The fact of the matter is, that while summer is just about over for you, dear reader, I'm still stuck back here in mid-July. Remember when that oppressive mass of hot humid air rolled over the Northeast and settled in for what seemed like forever? As it happens, this bout of weather arrived simultaneously with this issue's due dates. Since the wiring in our spacious New York offices won't support a copy machine and an air conditioner on the same circuit, we've found new meaning in our favorite phrase, "deadline hell." (Luckily, there's an air-conditioned movie theater right across the street; I'm probably one of the few people who wish that *Forrest Gump* was longer.)

I tend to write my editorial at the final hour, when the first crack of light is visible at the end of the tunnel. From here, it looks like we're going to succeed in pulling off a pretty nifty third issue; and I want especially to call your attention to the changes introduced in our video review column this time around.

We've done considerable thinking and rethinking about our video review policies, and there exists a certain philosophy behind our current approach that I'd like to share with our readers, so that you can let us know whether our approach works for you. It all adds up to a few rules of thumb that I've already shared with our panel of reviewers.

1. The success of the column should be measured by its usefulness. If we're able to lead you to one enjoyable film each issue, we have successfully enriched your life, and we can break our arms patting ourselves on the back.

2. Reviews of SF and fantasy blockbusters and major hits are not very useful. Take *The Mask*, for instance. So much has been written about this film that one more review is likely to add little to your life. Even if you haven't seen it, you've probably already developed an informed opinion about it. I thought *The Mask* was terrific, but an essay on why I liked it would serve little other than my own ego.

3. Negative reviews are not very useful. Other editors in this field seem to think that slamming a movie every now and then entertains the reader, and makes the magazine look honest. But not everyone likes the same films—and this is especially so of SF and fantasy films, particularly when you



The House of Horrors is just one of several little-known videos we're reviewing this issue.

step away from the mega-budget blockbusters. To some folks, "sensitive and thoughtful" means "sleeping pill." To others, "patently stupid time-waster" means "Z-grade genius."

Sure, there are unlovable clunkers out there, but there are enough neglected gems to overflow our column space. So I've asked our reviewers not to waste ink on movies that they don't like, and to make a special effort to indicate in their reviews just what part of the sci-fi audience will appreciate the appeal of each release they choose for review.

4. "Newer" does not mean "better." While we will be keeping a sharp eye on new releases, we won't hesitate to bring a film to your attention just because it isn't the newest item on the shelf. There are a lot of good, underpublicized films already out there that we'll enjoy sharing with you. We only require that the tape in question is still readily available from the distributor.

5. These rules are subject to change. You are the only judge of whether we're meeting the requirements of rule #1. I've said before that your letters are the single most important element in deciding the future course of *Sci-Fi Entertainment*. Let us know—is it useful for you? Why or why not? And, especially, what neglected video title have you discovered that you think our reviewers should share with the world?

Finally, I want to encourage those of you who have access to Internet or online services to send your comments by E-mail to flixman@dorsai.dorsai.org. Because it only takes a couple of keystrokes, I can promise a personal response to all E-mail received, even if it's only a few words—something just not possible with paper mail.

I started this editorial at 10 a.m. It's high noon now, and my keyboard is beginning to melt. I'm starting to think I can endure *Forrest Gump* one more time....

Ed Flixman

MARK HINTZ

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CARL A. GNAM, JR.

Editorial Director

EDWARD FLIXMAN

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ROBERT MARTIN

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STEPHEN VANN

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Editorial Assistants

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WARNER PUBLISHER SERVICES

International Distribution

Newsstand Consultants

JAMES J. GREGORY ASSOCIATES

Advertising Offices:

EAST COAST & MIDWEST

Display Advertising

MARK HINTZ

Advertising Associate

LESLIE MAYNE

457 Carlisle Dr., Herndon, VA 22070
703-471-1556 / FAX: 703-471-1559

WEST COAST

BARBARA BUCK

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of them had some sort of mystical bond ("We met before we met, in the manner of children—curious, apprehensive, and eager.... Someone introduced us, or didn't.... The sun was shining—or wasn't. We looked at each other for a long time"). During a series of mind-numbingly pretentious interviews, she'd solemnly feed him questions like "What is the difference between truth and integrity?", "What is the relationship between power and creativity?", and "Tell me what the difference is between people and humanity." It says something about Roddenberry's loneliness, his vanity, his fear of death, or his weakness for younger women, that he patiently tried to answer her. The fact that his answers are as boring and windy as her questions ("I think that humans are incredible. They are the most fascinating things in the universe") comes as no surprise.

While the aging Roddenberry drones on ("Good can be evil, and evil can be good, depending on circumstances"), Fern remains starstruck: "He reminds me of Jupiter/Zeus," she reports, "sitting so still, always in the act of creation, always in the process of generation. Physically large, mentally vast, and cosmically quiet, he has a paradoxical presence, imperious and self-effacing, as though he were winking in and out of existence, in and out of time."

It's not as if she didn't warn us; the danger signs are there on her first page, where she claims to understand "the very heart of the spiraled and unending quest of Gene Roddenberry: 'What does it mean to be? In this time, in this space, who are we?' His struggle to answer these questions is a tale of time slippage and alternate space, a delicate and determined unraveling of current quantum theory—physics to metaphysics and back again." That a respected university press (which I assume California is) saw fit to publish this drivel is as great a mystery as any of the cosmic questions mullied over in the book.

There is another warning, a final one, embedded in the text. "I wish I could write much more of what Gene told me," Fern declares at one point. "So much is beautiful, so much is brilliant, so much is revolutionary. But I cannot"—because, she says, she has promised him "20 years' grace." She threatens, however, that in 2011, "if I feel that the time is right," the world can look forward to a second book from her.

Talk about scary prospects!

To the former nun, Roddenberry was "honorable, honest, and true." To Joel Engel, author of *Gene Roddenberry: The Myth and the Man Behind "Star Trek"* (283 pp, \$22.95; New York: Hyperion), Roddenberry was a liar, lecher, credit-chiseler, cheat, alcoholic, drug addict, and literary mediocrity.

To speak charitably of this extraordinarily uncharitable book, Engel's biography may be viewed as a useful corrective to the loony adulation of Roddenberry's fans, "the almost godlike awe," as one observer put it, "in which he was held by the Trekkies as the

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fount of all knowledge." And indeed, although the book recreates private conversations and details of facial expressions that are all too plainly fictionalized, in general Engel seems to have done his homework; unlike the others reviewed here, his book has ample footnotes.



Gene Roddenberry with stars from the original TV show, including a cardboard Kirk.

But it's a thoroughly nasty piece of work, a book-length sneer so spiteful and one-sided in its treatment of Roddenberry and so fawning toward his enemies that it borders, at times, on the comical. Engel appears to have solicited unflattering opinions from everyone who ever had a beef against the man; we learn that he stole other writers' ideas, patronized prostitutes, bored people at parties, and padded his résumé. (He didn't really fly 89 or 109 combat missions, we learn; it was probably more like 25. He wasn't really "head writer" for *Have Gun, Will Travel*, as he claimed; he simply wrote a lot of the episodes.)

Engel's hostility even pervades the index, where, under "Roddenberry," one finds just a single page listed for "accomplishments," followed by, among other goodies, "agitation enjoyed by," "barriers built by," "confrontations," "credit assumed by," (14 pages worth), "depression," "divorce," "drinking" (another 14 pages), "drug abuse," "mental deterioration," "money sought by," "as one-trick pony," "past rewritten," "promises broken," "revenge," "scripts leaked," "self-loathing," "self-promotion," "sex as primary focus," and "womanizing."

Film critic Andrew Sarris once told an audience of students that a fellow writer had just come out with a harshly critical study of director Ingmar Bergman; it had taken him three years to write. "Imagine," said Sarris, "spending three years on someone you hate!" He shook his head. "Life's too short for that." It's certainly too short to waste on books like this.

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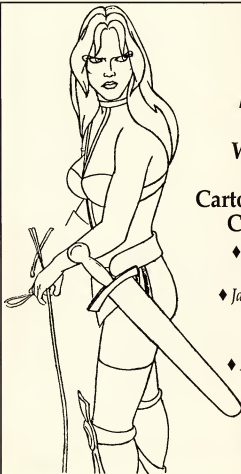
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A black and white photograph of a moth, likely a Hawkmoth, with its wings spread. The moth is centered against a dark background. Its wings are light-colored with dark, intricate patterns, including a prominent circular mark on the thorax. The wings are spread wide, showing the full extent of the pattern. The moth's body is dark and slender, with long, thin antennae visible at the top. The overall image is high contrast, emphasizing the details of the wing patterns.

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In a sense, Roddenberry asks the same of posterity; and it's on those terms, without denying the man's failings, that Alexander's biography chooses to take him: as he was.

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Video

Continued from page 64

dead are speaking to him through the medication of the bees.

Blair takes the viewer from death to resurrection and beyond, on a budget that most films spend on catering. He uses found footage to good effect, computer image manipulation to represent Jacob's hallucinations, and himself in the starring role. Needless to say, this film is not for all tastes. It trades emotional power and coherency for unique scope and vision. In addition, this is a movie that demands effort on the part of the viewer; much is left unexplained, and you have to meet it halfway, giving yourself over to its hypnotic spell and conceptual poetry. For moviegoers in search of something altogether different, *Wax* is an exhausting, remarkable experience.

Dust Devil (Paramount Home Video) This dark, atmospheric tale of the supernatural was substantially re-edited for its U.S. release, but it still packs a wallop.

Set in the remote desert regions of South Africa, the *Dust Devil* is a murderous desert wind that manifests itself in the form of a man. Appearing from out of the wilderness and looking like an outcast from a Sergio Leone spaghetti Western, Robert Burke stars in the title role. His mission is to ritualistically murder humans and collect their souls so that he may one day return to his true form. And in the chilling opening sequences, he seduces and kills a woman, paints her home with mystical symbols using her blood, sets the place ablaze, and continues on his journey. Though the character is never more than a cipher, Burke brings the proper mix of menace and icy charisma to the role.

Chelsea Field co-stars as another of his tortured prey—a woman running from her husband and contemplating suicide, who falls for this strange hitchhiker's charms, only to change her mind drastically when she finds a box full of severed fingers in his luggage. And superb African actor Zakes Mokae plays a police investigator who must put aside his White-trained, rational beliefs and gaze into the worlds of black magic and African religion in order to track down this serial killer.

Director Richard Stanley's first feature was the slick, but predictable *HARDWARE*, and this follow-up is a vast improvement. Though his sledgehammer style gets a bit heavy-handed at times, the evocative cinematography and fascinating concept keeps the film on track. Unfortunately, the filmmakers turn to rubbery special effects and cheap shocks during the climax, shattering much of the carefully-established mood. Like far too many genre films in the '90s, they forget that no amount of gruesome carnage can take the place of subtle, insidious terror. Luckily for them, this chilling tale has both to spare.

Steve Pulchaski

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The Monster Men

By ALEX METCALF

THERE WAS A TIME, not so long ago, when monsters had faces. There were occasions, as in *King Kong*, when the lead creature was a special effect; and, today, we still have the "psycho-killer" genre, where an actor is usually found under the makeup or the hockey mask. But the days of the "horror actor"—most often an accomplished Thespian whose career path took a turn for the macabre, leaving him forever typecast—seem gone forever.

To help put you in that Halloween mood, this month's quiz focuses on the faces of the filmic fiends of years past.

1. Known for roles in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* and *The Phantom of the Opera*, this actor also played a vampire in a "lost film," unseen for decades. Name the actor and the film.

2. He was Fritz in Whale's *Frankenstein* and Karl in *Bride of Frankenstein*, but he was best-known for his over-the-top role in *Dracula*. Name that role, and the actor.

3. Only one actor has appeared as Frankenstein's monster, as *Dracula*, and as Frankenstein's assistant in Universal films. Name the actor and the films.

4. Whale's *Frankenstein* features Boris Karloff as the Creature, but the film's credits read differently. What is Karloff's credit?

5. He had a bit part as a hunter in *Bride of Frankenstein*, but later starred as a popular monster in *House of Frankenstein*. What actor, what monster?

6. In the Universal horror cycle of the 1930s and '40s, only one of their creatures was always played by the same actor. Name the man and his role.

7. This actor had the title role in a 1940 Universal classic, but was not typed as a "horror actor" until 1953, when he starred in one of the most successful films of the "3-D" craze. Name these two films and their star.

8. Three years after playing a bloodthirsty plant creature, he played a heroic FBI agent battling giant ants. Name this '60s television star, and the creature films that got him started.

9. One 1960 film, scripted by the creator of



New "horror actor" Robert DeNiro stars as the creature in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*.

TV's *Outer Limits*, made him a star. In 1982, he returned to his original horror role in the first of three sequels he made over the next decade. Name the actor and the milestone film he starred in.

10. The year after he played the monster in *Curse of Frankenstein*, Christopher Lee played opposite Karloff as graverobber "Resurrection Joe," in what film?

11. Hammer Films adapted Guy Endore's story *The Werewolf of Paris* in 1961, with an unknown actor in the title role. Name the picture's title and its now-famous star.

12. This actor played Dr. Frankenstein in several films; the strangest had him put a young man's brain into the body of Susan Denberg, *Playboy's* "Miss August" of 1966. Name the actor and the film.

13. This European actor played Renfield opposite Christopher Lee in 1971, and the lead role in a big-budget vampire film released by 20th Century Fox in 1979. Name the two films, and the actor.

14. This Oscar-winning character actor starred in TV versions of *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* in 1968, and *Dracula* in 1974. Name the actor; extra credit if you can name the 1974 film in which he sacrificed women to "Chuku."

15. He once starred opposite Karloff, as a love-smitten French army lieutenant; decades later he returned to horror, as caretaker of a haunted hotel, and as a werewolf. Name the actor and these three films.

ANSWERS:

1. Lon Chaney (Senior) and *London After Midnight*; 2. *Dracula* (as Renfield), and the other roles listed, were played by Dwight Fries; 3. Lugosi; 4. *Frankenstein Meets the Wolfman* (as Frankenstein's monster); *Dracula*, and in *Son of Frankenstein* (as Yorgo, a creature he later repeated in *Ghost of Frankenstein*); 5. The actor's credit reads "7"; 6. John Carraway played a hunter in *Bride of Frankenstein*, and *Dracula* in *House of Frankenstein*; 7. Vincent Price; *The Invisible Man* man in all of the Universal pictures featuring Clegg; also known as *The Infernal Idol*; 15. Jack Vampyre; 14. Jack Palance, the star of 1974's *Return of the Living Dead*; 13. Klaus Kinski, in the films *Count Dracula* and *Nosferatu*; 12. Peter Cushing, in *Dracula* and *The Curse of the Werewolf*; 11. Christopher Lee; 10. *Curse of the Werewolf*, in *Frankenstein Meets the Wolfman* (as Frankenstein's monster); *Dracula*, and in *Son of Frankenstein* (as Yorgo, a creature he later repeated in *Ghost of Frankenstein*); 9. Anthony Perkins, in *Psycho* (adapted by *Outer Limits* creator Joseph Stefano from Robert Bloch's book); 8. *Return of the Living Dead* (adapted by *Outer Limits* creator Joseph Stefano from Robert Bloch's book); 7. *The Thing* (Matt Dillon of *TV's* *Gunsmoke*); in *The Thing* Returns, and *House of Wax*; 6. James Arness

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Dear Sci-Fi Entertainment:

I was always a fan of *Quantum Leap*, but missed a few of the episodes on the first run. I've recently been catching up on USA and the Sci-Fi Channel.

I recently caught an episode that I think concluded the last season, but I'm not sure. The last words in the show were "Dr. Beckett never returned home." Was this it?

Ronny Bergen
Salt Lake City, UT

Now you've spoiled the whole series for everybody! (Just kidding.) Yep, that was it.

Dear Ed Flixman,

If you're so smart, explain 2001: A Space Odyssey to me.

Robert Forman
Hoboken, NJ

Arthur C. Clarke once said: "If you understand 2001 completely, you failed. We understand to raise far more questions than we answered."

Dear Sci-Fi Entertainment,

I just came home from seeing *Speed*, and, while I understand that it wouldn't be right for you to cover action films, I understand that Keanu Reeves has made a science fiction movie that's supposed to come out soon. Do you think you can interview him, and maybe run some pictures of him in *Speed*?

Lauren Duffy
San Jose, CA

We certainly hope to! We also want to ask him about his role as the Dog Boy in Alex Winter's Freaked!

Dear Sci-Fi Entertainment,

Could you please define "Sci-Fi" for me? I seem to recall that it refers to science-based "speculative fiction." So far, your cover stories have been *Wolf* and *The Shadow*, and you've carried a great deal of material on fantasy and horror films, such as *The Lion King* and *Dracula*. This is not sci-fi by any definition that I've heard so far!

Glen Varone
Stone Mountain, GA

If we claimed to be a "science fiction" magazine, we would concede your point. Sci-fi, we think, is a little different. While we do try to emphasize science fiction over fantasy, we use a very wide definition of sci-fi, encompassing all three of the genres you mention. So, just as you'll find works of horror, fantasy and science fiction on the Sci-Fi Channel, we plan to keep our scope equally broad—unless, of course, we hear from a great many readers who agree with you.



Arthur C. Clarke's classic SF script for 2001, A Space Odyssey still puzzles viewers.

Dear Sci-Fi Entertainment,

I recall seeing a film many years ago; I've described it to a number of people, who look at me like I just dropped in from space.

It was one of those Japanese big monster movies, a scaly guy with a single horn that shoots laser beams and I remember that, even though the monster went around killing and destroying, there was a kid who wanted to save its life and even be pals with it.

But the weirdest part—and the reason I want to see this film again—is that I remember this monster doing a weird, stomping dance! If you don't know this film, maybe one of your readers could find it.

John Flinigan
Woodmere, NY

Yongary: Monster from the Deep was not Japanese, but a Korean imitation of the Japanese big monster pictures.

Dear Sci-Fi Entertainment,

I appreciate your "increased coverage" of sci-fi TV, but I notice one thing missing: *Robocop*! This is the most intelligent, fun, sci-fi/action series on TV right now!

John McShane
Salt Lake City, UT

Dear Sci-Fi Entertainment,

Your focus on directors and screenwriters is OK, but I hope in the future you'll be doing more features on the women who appear frequently in genre films. I'm thinking particularly of Meg Foster, an actress of considerable talent and beauty, who is also gifted with a pair of haunting eyes that seem to drill right into your skull! She does particularly well in villainous roles, such as Evil-Lyn in

the hilariously inept *He-Man and the Masters of the Universe*, and she betrayed Earth to the aliens in *They Live*. More recently, she's been appearing in low-budget fodder (*Stepfather 2: Make Room for Daddy*, *Best of the Best II*, *Hidden Fears*, *Project: Shadowchaser*) but she always makes the videos worth a rental, at least for as long as she's on screen. I hope that a piece in your magazine could help to get Foster the recognition that she deserves!

Kim Terry
Philadelphia, PA

Dear Editor,

I liked your editorial which stated that the Sci-Fi Channel wants to promote SF series on other channels, since that will help the genre to survive and thrive. I like your attitude. I have been trying to get attention for a certain SF program being run on the Bravo cable channel, but figured that your magazine wouldn't talk about this series, since Bravo is a rival.

The series is ABC's 1987 *Max Headroom*, which was critically acclaimed and won three Emmys. It's long overdue for a tribute; to me, it's a SF classic and, unfortunately, it hasn't been treated as one. It was mainly a satire of futuristic television, taking a sharp look at how networks operate, and explained why network programming is so often disappointing. It was also a series that strongly went after '80s-style greed. It exposed corporate leaders and politicians doing all sorts of nefarious things in the name of money and power, while the populace were kept mindlessly happy watching their TV screens. This show actually tried to teach viewers something. And I hope that when it finishes its run on Bravo, you'll pick it up for the Sci-Fi Channel.

By the way, I always like it when your channel shows *anime*. These films seem to be mostly for guys, what with the scantily clad women in them, but I still like the animation and the stories. Before I saw these films, I was only familiar with things like *Voltron* and *Speed Racer*, which are more for children. I thought *Project A-ko* was hilarious, and in the previous group I especially liked *Vampire Hunter D*.

Tammy Smith
Santee, CA

I doubt if we could do a better job than you did in paying tribute to Max, Tammy. But if your fellow readers agree with the above requests, we'll gladly go after Robocop, Meg Foster and Max Headroom. Please address all paper correspondence to the Editor, Sci-Fi Entertainment, 457 Carlisle Dr., Herndon, VA 22070; and electronic mail to: flixman@dorsai.dorsai.org.

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